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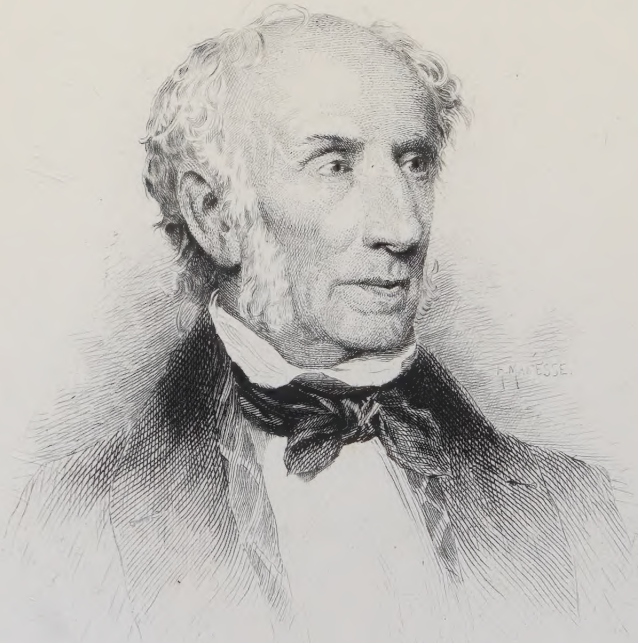
THE PROSE WORKS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

VOL. II



William Wordsworth

after Henry Inman

PROSE WORKS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

EDITED BY

WILLIAM KNIGHT

VOL. II

London

MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD.

NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN CO.

1896

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE following is a brief supplement to the Preface in the first volume of this edition of "The Prose Works" of Wordsworth.

In both volumes I have included several Letters written by Wordsworth, and published (as such) during his lifetime: in Vol. I. his Letter to the Bishop of Landaff, another to John Wilson (Christopher North), a third which he sent to the editor of *The Friend*, and a fourth inscribed to Captain Pasley; in Vol. II. one addressed to "A Friend of Robert Burns," and a second on "The Catholic Relief Bill."

These "Letters" are included in his "Prose Works," because they were all published by himself; and, in the earlier periods of this century, authors were accustomed to give the title of "Letter" to an elaborate "Essay."

Many of Wordsworth's best "Letters," however, were not published by himself, and cannot be included amongst his "Prose Works," though some of them are longer than the epistles published in his lifetime.

Notably, when writing to Lady Beaumont — about the winter-garden at Coleorton, which he planned for her and Sir George—he dictated a remarkable "Letter" much longer than most of the "Essays" which have been offered to the world.

I may say, in anticipation, that many of those Letters — which are more numerous than would have been expected from the poet's constitutional dislike to correspondence, and his habit of getting most of his writing done by proxy—contain some of his best *dicta*, and the daintiest of his critical opinions on men and things. Meanwhile, they are all reserved.

In the Preface to *The Excursion*, and to the *Poems* of 1815, as well as in the *Essay Supplementary to the Preface* of 1815, the text occasionally differs from that of the edition of 1836—in which the revision was thorough—and also from that of subsequent editions. These changes are worthy of note, as most of the quasi-egoistic passages—where personal pronouns came in—are struck out.

In the very few cases in which Wordsworth's notes to his "Prose Works" vary slightly in different years, I have not considered it necessary to indicate the variations.

As the two volumes of these "Prose Works" are consecutive, I number the first item in volume II. as number IX. in the series.

In the *Description of the Scenery of the Lakes*, as elsewhere, the archaic spellings and capital letters, which

modern use and wont has discarded, are retained. It is necessary that these should be uniform, and Wordsworth was not at all particular on this point. If such words as Vale, Fell, Sands, Stream, etc., are to have capital letters, they ought to have them throughout and invariably. Similarly, the spelling of such words as Wastdale, Ullswater, Haweswater, etc., which Wordsworth gave in his table of contents, is retained in this edition.

WILLIAM KNIGHT.

IX

A GUIDE THROUGH THE DISTRICT OF THE LAKES IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND, WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENERY, ETC., FOR THE USE OF TOURISTS AND RESIDENTS

CONTENTS

DIRECTIONS AND INFORMATION FOR THE TOURIST

Windermere.—Ambleside.—Coniston.—Ulpha Kirk.—Road from Ambleside to Keswick.—Grasmere.—The Vale of Keswick.—Buttermere and Crummock.—Loweswater.—Wastdale.—Ullswater, with its tributary Streams.—Haweswater, etc.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENERY OF THE LAKES

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VIEW OF THE COUNTRY AS FORMED BY NATURE

Vales diverging from a common Centre.—Effect of Light and Shadow as dependent upon the Position of the Vales.—Mountains,—their Substance,—Surfaces,—and Colours.—Winter Colouring.—The Vales,—Lakes,—Islands,—Tarns,—Woods,—Rivers,—Climate,—Night.

Section Second

ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY AS AFFECTED BY ITS INHABITANTS

Retrospect.—Primitive Aspect.—Roman and British Antiquities.—Feudal Tenantry,—their Habitations and Enclosures.—Tenantry reduced in Number by the Union of the Two Crowns.—State of Society after that Event.—Cottages,—Bridges,—Places of Worship,—Parks and Mansions.—General Picture of Society.

Section Third

CHANGES, AND RULES OF TASTE FOR PREVENTING THEIR BAD EFFECTS

Tourists.—New Settlers.—The Country disfigured.—Causes of false Taste in Grounds and Buildings.—Ancient Models recommended.—Houses.—Colouring of Buildings.—Grounds and Plantations.—The Larch.—Planting.—Further Changes Probable.—Conclusion.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS

Time for visiting the Country.—Order in which Objects should be approached.—Views from the Heights.—Comparisons, how injurious.—Alpine Scenes compared with Cumbrian, etc.—Phenomena.—Comparative Estimate.

EXCURSIONS

To the Top of Scawfell and on the Banks of Ullswater

ITINERARY

DIRECTIONS AND INFORMATION FOR THE TOURIST[1]

In preparing this Manual, it was the Author's principal wish to furnish a Guide or Companion for the *Minds* of Persons of taste, and feeling for Landscape, who might be entitled to explore the District of the Lakes with that degree of attention to which its beauty may fairly lay claim. For the more sure attainment, however, of this primary object, he will begin by undertaking the humble and tedious task of supplying the Tourist with directions how to approach the several scenes in their best, or most convenient, order. But first, supposing the

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[1] Wordsworth's *Description of the Scenery of the Lakes in the North of England*, afterwards expanded as *A Guide through the District of the Lakes in the North of England*, etc., *with a Description of the Scenery, for the use of Tourists and Residents*, originally formed an introduction to the Rev. Joseph Wilkinson's *Select Views in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire*, published at London in 1810 (12 Nos. in one volume folio).

It next appeared in 1820, in the volume of Sonnets on the River Duddon, the full title of which was, *The River Duddon, a series of Sonnets: Vaudracour and Julia; and other Poems, to which is annexed a topographical description of the Country of the Lakes in the North of England*, by William Wordsworth.

In 1822 it was published for the first time separately, in 12mo, divided into sections, with much additional matter. It included some remarks on the scenery of the Alps (Wordsworth had revisited Switzerland in 1820), and an account of an excursion to Scawfell, with a final chapter of "Directions and Information for the Tourist." This edition was reprinted in 1823.

It was expanded in a fifth edition, 8vo, printed at Kendal in 1835. In this—which contained Wordsworth's final text, and is

approach to be made from the south, and through Yorkshire, there are certain interesting spots which may be confidently recommended to his notice, if time can be spared before entering upon the Lake District; and the route may be changed in returning.

There are three approaches to the Lakes through Yorkshire; the least adviseable is the great north road by Catterick and Greta Bridge, and onwards to Penrith. The Traveller, however, taking this route, might halt at Greta Bridge, and be well recompenced if he can afford to give an hour or two to the banks of the Greta, and of the Tees, at Rokeby. Barnard Castle also, about two miles up the Tees, is a striking object, and the main North Road might be rejoined at Bowes. Every one has heard of the great Fall of the Tees above Middleham, interesting for its grandeur, as the avenue of rocks that leads to it, is to the geologist. But this place lies so far out of the way as scarcely to be within the compass of our notice. It might, however, be visited by a Traveller

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therefore selected for reproduction in the present edition—the "Directions and Information for Tourists" precedes the "Description of the Scenery of the Lakes;" and to the account of the ascent of Scawfell is added a curious recast of a passage in one of his sister's Journals of "a mountain ramble" in 1805, describing an excursion to Ullswater. The original MS. describing this mountain ramble is at Coleorton Hall, in Leicestershire; but it was printed in the *Transactions of the Wordsworth Society*, No. V. (1883).

The edition of 1835 was republished in 1842 and 1849. It has subsequently appeared in popular reprints, both by itself and along with Professor Sedgwick's *Five Letters on the Geology of the Lake District*. The "Itinerary of the Lakes," which the publishers added "with permission of the author," has a certain topographical value, and is reproduced in this edition.

The changes of text in the several editions of the *Guide* are not indicated. It may be remarked, however, that the poetic fragment given at pp. 35-6, first published in 1827 under the title *Water-Fowl*—but which is a part of a canto of *The Recluse*, entitled "Home in Grasmere"—differs slightly both from the printed text of *Water-Fowl*, and from the MS. of *The Recluse* in its final form. —ED.

on foot, or on horseback, who could rejoin the main road upon Stanemoor.

The second road leads through a more interesting tract of country, beginning at Ripon, from which place see Fountain's Abbey, and thence by Hackfall, and Masham, to Jervaux Abbey, and up the Vale of Wensley; turning aside before Askrigg is reached, to see Aysgarth-force, upon the Ure; and again, near Hawes, to Hardraw Scar, of which, with its waterfall, Turner has a fine drawing. Thence over the fells to Sedbergh, and Kendal.

The third approach from Yorkshire is through Leeds. Four miles beyond that town are the ruins of Kirkstall Abbey, should that road to Skipton be chosen; but the other by Otley may be made much more interesting by turning off at Addington to Bolton Bridge, for the sake of visiting the Abbey and grounds. It would be well, however, for a party previously to secure beds, if wanted, at the inn, as there is but one, and it is much resorted to in summer.

The Traveller on foot, or horseback, would do well to follow the banks of the Wharf upwards, to Burnsall, and thence cross over the hills to Gordale—a noble scene, beautifully described in Gray's Tour, and with which no one can be disappointed. Thence to Malham, where there is a respectable village inn, and so on, by Malham Cove, to Settle.

Travellers in carriages must go from Bolton Bridge to Skipton, where they rejoin the main road; and should they be inclined to visit Gordale, a tolerable road turns off beyond Skipton. Beyond Settle, under Giggleswick Scar, the road passes an ebbing and flowing well, worthy the notice of the Naturalist. Four miles to the right of Ingleton, is Weathercote Cave, a fine object, but whoever diverges for this, must return to Ingleton. Near Kirkby Lonsdale observe the view from the bridge over the Lune, and descend to the channel of the river, and by no means omit looking at the Vale of Lune from the Churchyard.

The journey towards the Lake country through Lancashire, is, with the exception of the Vale of the Ribble, at Preston, uninteresting; till you come near Lancaster, and obtain a view of the fells and mountains of Lancashire and Westmorland; with Lancaster Castle, and the Tower of the Church seeming to make part of the Castle, in the foreground.

They who wish to see the celebrated ruins of Furness Abbey, and are not afraid of crossing the Sands, may go from Lancaster to Ulverston; from which place take the direct road to Dalton; but by all means return through Urswick, for the sake of the view from the top of the hill, before descending into the grounds of Conishead Priory. From this quarter the Lakes would be advantageously approached by Coniston; thence to Hawkshead, and by the Ferry over Windermere, to Bowness: a much better introduction than by going direct from Coniston to Ambleside, which ought not to be done, as that would greatly take off from the effect of Windermere.

Let us now go back to Lancaster. The direct road thence to Kendal is 22 miles, but by making a circuit of 8 miles, the Vale of the Lune to Kirkby Lonsdale will be included. The whole tract is pleasing; there is one view mentioned by Gray and Mason especially so. In West's Guide it is thus pointed out:—"About a quarter of a mile beyond the third mile-stone, where the road makes a turn to the right, there is a gate on the left which leads into a field where the station meant, will be found." Thus far for those who approach the Lakes from the South.

Travellers from the North would do well to go from Carlisle by Wigton, and proceed along the Lake of Bassenthwaite to Keswick; or, if convenience should take them first to Penrith, it would still be better to cross the country to Keswick, and begin with that vale, rather than with Ullswater. It is worth while to mention, in this place, that the banks of the river Eden, about Corby,

are well worthy of notice, both on account of their natural beauty, and the viaducts which have recently been carried over the bed of the river, and over a neighbouring ravine. In the Church of Wetherby, close by, is a fine piece of monumental sculpture by Nollekens.[1] The scenes of Nunnery, upon the Eden, or rather that part of them which is upon Croglin, a mountain stream there falling into the Eden, are, in their way, unrivalled.[2] But the nearest road thither, from Corby, is so bad, that no one can be advised to take it in a carriage. Nunnery may be reached from Corby by making a circuit and crossing the Eden at Armathwaite bridge. A portion of this road, however, is bad enough.

As much the greatest number of Lake Tourists begin by passing from Kendal to Bowness, upon Windermere, our notices shall commence with that Lake. Bowness is situated upon its eastern side, and at equal distance from each extremity of the Lake of

WINDERMERE

The lower part of this Lake is rarely visited, but has many interesting points of view, especially at Storr's Hall and at Fell-foot, where the Coniston Mountains peer nobly over the western barrier, which elsewhere, along the whole Lake, is comparatively tame. To one also who has ascended the hill from Graythwaite on the western side, the Promontory called Rawlinson's Nab, Storr's Hall, and the Troutbeck Mountains, about sunset, make a splendid landscape. The view from the Pleasure-house of the Station near the Ferry has suffered much from Larch plantations; this mischief, however, is gradually disappearing, and the Larches, under the management of the proprietor, Mr. Curwen, are giving

[1] Compare the two sonnets (Nos. 39 and 40) in the Series of *Poems composed and suggested during a Tour, in the Summer of* 1833, on this Monument to Mrs. Howard.—ED.

[2] Compare the 41st sonnet, in the Series referred to in the previous note, on *Nunnery*.—ED.

way to the native wood. Windermere ought to be seen both from its shores and from its surface. None of the other Lakes unfold so many fresh beauties to him who sails upon them. This is owing to its greater size, to the islands, and to its having *two* vales at the head, with their accompanying mountains of nearly equal dignity. Nor can the grandeur of these two terminations be seen at once from any point, except from the bosom of the Lake. The Islands may be explored at any time of the day; but one bright unruffled evening, must, if possible, be set apart for the splendour, the stillness, and solemnity of a three hours' voyage upon the higher division of the Lake, not omitting, towards the end of the excursion, to quit the expanse of water, and peep into the close and calm River at the head;[1] which, in its quiet character, at such a time, appears rather like an overflow of the peaceful Lake itself, than to have any more immediate connection with the rough mountains whence it has descended, or the turbulent torrents by which it is supplied. Many persons content themselves with what they see of Windermere during their progress in a boat from Bowness to the head of the Lake, walking thence to Ambleside. But the whole road from Bowness is rich in diversity of pleasing or grand scenery; there is scarcely a field on the road side, which, if entered, would not give to the landscape some additional charm. Low-wood Inn, a mile from the head of Windermere, is a most pleasant halting-place; no inn in the whole district is so agreeably situated for water views and excursions; and the fields above it, and the lane that leads to Troutbeck, present beautiful views towards each extremity of the Lake. From this place, and from

AMBLESIDE,

rides may be taken in numerous directions, and the

[1] The Rothay.—ED.

interesting walks are inexhaustible ;[1] a few out of the main road may be particularized ;—the lane that leads from Ambleside to Skelgill ; the ride, or walk by Rothay Bridge, and up the stream under Loughrigg Fell, continued on the western side of Rydal Lake, and along the fell to the foot of Grasmere Lake, and thence round by the church of Grasmere ; or, turning round Loughrigg Fell by Loughrigg Tarn and the River Brathay, back to Ambleside. From Ambleside is another charming excursion by Clappersgate, where cross the Brathay, and proceed with the river on the right to the hamlet of Skelwith-fold ; when the houses are passed, turn, before you descend the hill, through a gate on the right, and from a rocky point is a fine view of the Brathay River, Langdale Pikes, etc. ; then proceed to Colwith-force, and up Little Langdale to Blea Tarn. The scene in which this small piece of water lies, suggested to the Author the following description (given in his Poem of the *Excursion*), supposing the spectator to look down upon it, not from the road, but from one of its elevated sides.

Behold !
Beneath our feet, a little lowly Vale,
A lowly Vale, and yet uplifted high
Among the mountains ; even as if the spot
Had been, from eldest time by wish of theirs,
So placed, to be shut out from all the world !
Urn-like it was in shape, deep as an Urn ;
With rocks encompassed, save that to the South
Was one small opening, where a heath-clad ridge
Supplied a boundary less abrupt and close ;
A quiet treeless nook,[2] with two green fields,
A liquid pool that glittered in the sun,
And one bare Dwelling ; one Abode, no more !

[1] Mr. Green's *Guide to the Lakes*, in two vols., contains a complete Magazine of minute and accurate information of this kind, with the names of mountains, streams, etc.—W. W.

[2] No longer strictly applicable, on account of recent plantations.—W. W.

It seemed the home of poverty and toil,
Though not of want: the little fields, made green
By husbandry of many thrifty years,
Paid cheerful tribute to the moorland House.
—There crows the Cock, single in his domain:
The small birds find in Spring no thicket there
To shroud them; only from the neighbouring Vales
The Cuckoo, straggling up to the hill tops,
Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place.[1]

From this little Vale return towards Ambleside by Great Langdale, stopping, if there be time, to see Dungeon-ghyll waterfall.

The Lake of

Coniston

may be conveniently visited from Ambleside, but is seen to most advantage by entering the country over the Sands from Lancaster. The Stranger, from the moment he sets his foot on those Sands, seems to leave the turmoil and traffic of the world behind him; and, crossing the majestic plain whence the sea has retired, he beholds, rising apparently from its base, the cluster of mountains among which he is going to wander, and towards whose recesses, by the Vale of Coniston, he is gradually and peacefully led. From the Inn at the head of Coniston Lake, a leisurely Traveller might have much pleasure in looking into Yewdale and Tilberthwaite, returning to his Inn from the head of Yewdale by a mountain track which has the farm of Tarn Hows, a little on the right: by this road is seen much the best view of Coniston Lake from the south. At the head of Coniston Water there is an agreeable Inn, from which an enterprising Tourist might go to the Vale of the Duddon, over Walna Scar, down to Seathwaite, Newfield, and to the rocks where the river issues from a narrow pass into the broad Vale. The Stream is very interesting for the space of a mile above this point, and

[1] See *The Excursion*, book ii. ll. 327-348.—Ed.

below, by Ulpha Kirk, till it enters the Sands, where it is overlooked by the solitary Mountain Black Comb, the summit of which, as that experienced surveyor, Colonel Mudge, declared, commands a more extensive view than any point in Britain. Ireland he saw more than once, but not when the sun was above the horizon.

Close by the Sea, lone sentinel,
Black-Comb his forward station keeps;
He breaks the sea's tumultuous swell,—
And ponders o'er the level deeps.

He listens to the bugle horn,
Where Eskdale's lovely valley bends;
Eyes Walney's early fields of corn;
Sea-birds to Holker's woods he sends.

Beneath his feet the sunk ship rests,
In Duddon Sands, its masts all bare:
. . . . .

The Minstrels of Windermere, by Chas. Farish, B.D.

The Tourist may either return to the Inn at Coniston by Broughton, or, by turning to the left before he comes to that town, or, which would be much better, he may cross from

ULPHA KIRK

Over Birker moor, to Birker-force, at the head of the finest ravine in the country; and thence up the Vale of the Esk, by Hardknot and Wrynose, back to Ambleside. Near the road, in ascending from Eskdale, are conspicuous remains of a Roman fortress. Details of the Duddon and Donnerdale are given in the Author's series of Sonnets upon the Duddon and in the accompanying Notes. In addition to its two Vales at its head, Windermere communicates with two lateral Vallies; that of Troutbeck, distinguished by the mountains at its head—by picturesque remains of cottage architecture; and, towards the lower part, by bold foregrounds formed by the steep and winding banks of the river. This Vale,

as before mentioned, may be most conveniently seen from Low Wood. The other lateral Valley, that of Hawkshead, is visited to most advantage, and most conveniently, from Bowness; crossing the Lake by the Ferry—then pass the two villages of Sawrey, and on quitting the latter, you have a fine view of the Lake of Esthwaite, and the cone of one of the Langdale Pikes in the distance.

Before you leave Ambleside give three minutes to looking at a passage of the brook which runs through the town; it is to be seen from a garden on the right bank of the stream, a few steps above the bridge—the garden at present is rented by Mrs. Airey.—Stockgill-force, upon the same stream, will have been mentioned to you as one of the sights of the neighbourhood. And by a Tourist halting a few days in Ambleside, the *Nook* also might be visited; a spot where there is a bridge over Scandale-beck, which makes a pretty subject for the pencil. Lastly, for residents of a week or so at Ambleside, there are delightful rambles over every part of Loughrigg Fell and among the enclosures on its sides; particularly about Loughrigg Tarn, and on its eastern side about Fox How and the properties adjoining to the northwards.

Road from Ambleside to Keswick

The Waterfalls of Rydal are pointed out to every one. But it ought to be observed here, that Rydal-mere is nowhere seen to advantage from the *main road*. Fine views of it may be had from Rydal Park; but these grounds, as well as those of Rydal Mount and Ivy Cottage, from which also it is viewed to advantage, are private. A foot road passing behind Rydal Mount and under Nab Scar to Grasmere, is very favourable to views of the Lake and the Vale, looking back towards Ambleside. The horse road also, along the western side of the Lake, under Loughrigg Fell, as before mentioned, does justice to the beauties of this small mere, of which

the Traveller who keeps the high road is not at all aware.

GRASMERE

There are two small Inns in the Vale of Grasmere, one near the Church, from which it may be conveniently explored in every direction, and a mountain walk taken up Easedale to Easedale Tarn, one of the finest tarns in the country, thence to Stickle Tarn, and to the top of Langdale Pikes. See also the Vale of Grasmere from Butterlip How. A boat is kept by the innkeeper, and this circular Vale, in the solemnity of a fine evening, will make, from the bosom of the Lake, an impression that will be scarcely ever effaced.

The direct road from Grasmere to Keswick does not (as has been observed of Rydal Mere), show to advantage Thirlmere, or Wythburn Lake, with its surrounding mountains. By a Traveller proceeding at leisure, a deviation ought to be made from the main road, when he has advanced a little beyond the sixth mile-stone short of Keswick, from which point there is a noble view of the Vale of Legberthwaite, with Blencathra (commonly called Saddle-back), in front. Having previously inquired, at the Inn near Wythburn Chapel, the best way from this mile-stone to the bridge that divides the Lake, he must cross it, and proceed with the Lake on the right, to the hamlet a little beyond its termination, and rejoin the main road upon Shoulthwaite Moss, about four miles from Keswick; or, if on foot, the Tourist may follow the stream that issues from Thirlmere down the romantic Vale of St. John's, and so (inquiring the way at some cottage) to Keswick, by a circuit of little more than a mile. A more interesting tract of country is scarcely any where to be seen, than the road between Ambleside and Keswick, with the deviations that have been pointed out. Helvellyn may be conveniently ascended from the Inn at Wythburn.

The Vale of Keswick

This Vale stretches, without winding, nearly North and South, from the head of Derwent Water to the foot of Bassenthwaite Lake. It communicates with Borrowdale on the South; with the river Greta, and Thirlmere, on the East, with which the Traveller has become acquainted on his way from Ambleside; and with the Vale of Newlands on the West—which last Vale he may pass through, in going to, or returning from, Buttermere. The best views of Keswick Lake are from Crow Park; Frier's Crag; the Stable-field, close by; the Vicarage, and from various points in taking the circuit of the Lake. More distant views, and perhaps full as interesting, are from the side of Latrigg, from Ormathwaite, and Applethwaite; and thence along the road at the foot of Skiddaw towards Bassenthwaite, for about a quarter of a mile. There are fine bird's eye views from the Castle-hill; from Ashness, on the road to Watenlath, and by following the Watenlath stream downwards to the Cataract of Lodore. This Lake also, if the weather be fine, ought to be circumnavigated. There are good views along the western side of Bassenthwaite Lake, and from Armathwaite at its foot; but the eastern side from the high road has little to recommend it. The Traveller from Carlisle, approaching by way of Ireby, has, from the old road on the top of Bassenthwaite-hawse, much the most striking view of the Plain and Lake of Bassenthwaite, flanked by Skiddaw, and terminated by Wallowcrag on the south-east of Derwent Lake; the same point commands an extensive view of Solway Frith and the Scotch Mountains. They who take the circuit of Derwent Lake, may at the same time include Borrowdale, going as far as Bowder-stone, or Rosthwaite. Borrowdale is also conveniently seen on the way to Wastdale over Styhead; or, to Buttermere, by Seatoller and Honister Crag; or, going over the Stake, through Langdale, to Ambleside. Buttermere may be visited by

a shorter way through Newlands, but though the descent upon the Vale of Buttermere, by this approach, is very striking, as it also is to one entering by the head of the Vale, under Honister Crag, yet, after all, the best entrance from Keswick is from the lower part of the Vale, having gone over Whinlater to Scale Hill, where there is a roomy Inn, with very good accommodation. The Mountains of the Vale of

BUTTERMERE AND CRUMMOCK

are nowhere so impressive as from the bosom of Crummock Water. Scale-force, near it, is a fine chasm, with a lofty, though but slender, fall of water.

From Scale Hill a pleasant walk may be taken to an eminence in Mr. Marshall's woods, and another by crossing the bridge at the foot of the hill, upon which the Inn stands, and turning to the right, after the opposite hill has been ascended a little way, then follow the road for half a mile or so that leads towards Lorton, looking back upon Crummock Water, etc., between the openings of the fences. Turn back and make your way to

LOWESWATER

But this small Lake is only approached to advantage from the other end; therefore any Traveller going by this road to Wastdale, must look back upon it. This road to Wastdale, after passing the village of Lamplugh Cross, presents suddenly a fine view of the Lake of Ennerdale, with its Mountains; and, six or seven miles beyond, leads down upon Calder Abbey. Little of this ruin is left, but that little is well worthy of notice. At Calder Bridge are two comfortable Inns, and, a few miles beyond, accommodations may be had at the Strands, at the foot of Wastdale. Into

WASTDALE

are three horse-roads, viz. over the Stye, from Borrow-

dale; a short cut from Eskdale by Burnmoor Tarn, which road descends upon the head of the Lake; and the principal entrance from the open country by the Strands at its foot. This last is much the best approach. Wastdale is well worth the notice of the Traveller who is not afraid of fatigue; no part of the country is more distinguished by sublimity. Wastwater may also be visited from Ambleside; by going up Langdale, over Hardknot and Wrynose—down Eskdale and by Irton Hall to the Strands; but this road can only be taken on foot, or on horseback, or in a cart.

We will conclude with

ULLSWATER,

as being perhaps, upon the whole, the happiest combination of beauty and grandeur, which any of the Lakes affords. It lies not more than ten miles from Ambleside, and the Pass of Kirkstone and the descent from it are very impressive; but, notwithstanding, this Vale, like the others, loses much of its effect by being entered from the head: so that it is better to go from Keswick through Matterdale, and descend upon Gowbarrow Park; you are thus brought at once upon a magnificent view of the two higher reaches of the Lake. Ara-force thunders down the Ghyll on the left, at a small distance from the road. If Ullswater be approached from Penrith, a mile and a half brings you to the winding vale of Eamont, and the prospects increase in interest till you reach Patterdale; but the first four miles along Ullswater by this road are comparatively tame; and in order to see the lower part of the Lake to advantage, it is necessary to go round by Pooley Bridge, and to ride at least three miles along the Westmorland side of the water, towards Martindale. The views, especially if you ascend from the road into the fields, are magnificent; yet this is only mentioned that the transient Visitant may know what exists; for it would be inconvenient to go in search of them. They who take this course of three or four miles

on foot, should have a boat in readiness at the end of the walk, to carry them across to the Cumberland side of the Lake, near Old Church, thence to pursue the road upwards to Patterdale. The Churchyard Yew-tree still survives at Old Church, but there are no remains of a Place of Worship, a New Chapel having been erected in a more central situation, which Chapel was consecrated by the then Bishop of Carlisle, when on his way to crown Queen Elizabeth, he being the only Prelate who would undertake the office. It may be here mentioned that Bassenthwaite Chapel yet stands in a bay as sequestered as the Site of Old Church; such situations having been chosen in disturbed times to elude marauders.

The Trunk, or Body of the Vale of Ullswater need not be further noticed, as its beauties show themselves: but the curious Traveller may wish to know something of its tributary Streams.

At Dalemain, about three miles from Penrith, a Stream is crossed called the Dacre, or Dacor, which name it bore as early as the time of the Venerable Bede. This stream does not enter the Lake, but joins the Eamont a mile below. It rises in the moorish Country about Penruddock, flows down a soft sequestered Valley, passing by the ancient mansions of Hutton John and Dacre Castle. The former is pleasantly situated, though of a character somewhat gloomy and monastic, and from some of the fields near Dalemain, Dacre Castle, backed by the jagged summit of Saddleback, with the Valley and Stream in front, forms a grand picture. There is no other stream that conducts to any glen or valley worthy of being mentioned, till we reach that which leads up to Ara-force, and thence into Matterdale, before spoken of. Matterdale, though a wild and interesting spot, has no peculiar features that would make it worth the Stranger's while to go in search of them; but, in Gowbarrow Park, the lover of Nature might linger for hours. Here is a powerful Brook, which dashes among rocks through a

deep glen,[1] hung on every side with a rich and happy intermixture of native wood; here are beds of luxuriant fern, aged hawthorns, and hollies decked with honeysuckles; and fallow-deer glancing and bounding over the lawns and through the thickets. These are the attractions of the retired views, or constitute a foreground for ever-varying pictures of the majestic Lake, forced to take a winding course by bold promontories, and environed by mountains of sublime form, towering above each other. At the outlet of Gowbarrow Park, we reach a third stream, which flows through a little recess called Glencoin, where lurks a single house, yet visible from the road. Let the Artist or leisurely Traveller turn aside to it, for the buildings and objects around them are romantic and picturesque. Having passed under the steeps of Styebarrow Crag, and the remains of its native woods, at Glenridding Bridge, a fourth Stream is crossed.

The opening on the side of Ullswater Vale, down which this Stream flows, is adorned with fertile fields, cottages, and natural groves, that agreeably unite with the transverse views of the Lake; and the Stream, if followed up after the enclosures are left behind, will lead along bold water-breaks and waterfalls to a silent Tarn[2] in the recesses of Helvellyn. This desolate spot was formerly haunted by eagles, that built in the precipice which forms its western barrier. These birds used to wheel and hover round the head of the solitary angler. It also derives a melancholy interest from the fate of a young man, a stranger, who perished some years ago, by falling down the rocks in his attempt to cross over to Grasmere. His remains were discovered by means of

[1] See the poem entitled *Airey-Force Valley*, first published in 1842.—ED.

[2] Compare two lines in the poem *Fidelity*, in the "Poetical Works," vol. iii. p. 45—

A lofty precipice in front,
A silent tarn below. ED.

a faithful dog that had lingered here for the space of three months, self-supported, and probably retaining to the last an attachment to the skeleton of its master. But to return to the road in the main Vale of Ullswater. —At the head of the Lake (being now in Patterdale) we cross a fifth Stream, Grisdale Beck: this would conduct through a woody steep, where may be seen some unusually large ancient hollies, up to the level area of the Valley of Grisdale; hence there is a path for foot-travellers, and along which a horse may be led to Grasmere. A sublime combination of mountain forms appears in front while ascending the bed of this valley, and the impression increases till the path leads almost immediately under the projecting masses of Helvellyn. Having retraced the banks of the Stream to Patterdale, and pursued the road up the main Dale, the next considerable stream would, if ascended in the same manner, conduct to Deep-dale, the character of which Valley may be conjectured from its name. It is terminated by a cove, a craggy and gloomy abyss, with precipitous sides; a faithful receptacle of the snows that are driven into it, by the west wind, from the summit of Fairfield. Lastly, having gone along the western side of Brotherswater and passed Hartsop Hall, a Stream soon after issues from a cove richly decorated with native wood. This spot is, I believe, never explored by Travellers; but, from these sylvan and rocky recesses, whoever looks back on the gleaming surface of Brotherswater, or forward to the precipitous sides and lofty ridges of Dove Crag, etc., will be equally pleased with the beauty, the grandeur, and the wildness of the scenery.

Seven Glens or Vallies have been noticed, which branch off from the Cumberland side of the Vale. The opposite side has only two Streams of any importance, one of which would lead up from the point where it crosses the Kirkstone-road, near the foot of Brotherswater, to the decaying hamlet of Hartsop, remarkable for its cottage architecture, and thence to Hayswater,

much frequented by anglers. The other, coming down Martindale, enters Ullswater at Sandwyke, opposite to Gowbarrow Park. No persons but such as come to Patterdale, merely to pass through it, should fail to walk as far as Blowick, the only enclosed land which on this side borders the higher part of the Lake. The axe has here indiscriminately levelled a rich wood of birches and oaks, that divided this favoured spot into a hundred pictures. It has yet its land-locked bays, and rocky promontories; but those beautiful woods are gone, which *perfected* its seclusion; and scenes, that might formerly have been compared to an inexhaustible volume, are now spread before the eye in a single sheet,—magnificent indeed, but seemingly perused in a moment! From Blowick a narrow track conducts along the craggy side of Place-fell, richly adorned with juniper, and sprinkled over with birches, to the village of Sandwyke, a few straggling houses, that with the small estates attached to them, occupy an opening opposite to Lyulph's Tower and Gowbarrow Park. In Martindale, the road loses sight of the Lake, and leads over a steep hill, bringing you again into view of Ullswater. Its lowest reach, four miles in length, is before you; and the view terminated by the long ridge of Cross Fell in the distance. Immediately under the eye is a deep-indented bay, with a plot of fertile land, traversed by a small brook, and rendered cheerful by two or three substantial houses of a more ornamented and showy appearance than is usual in those wild spots.

From Pooley Bridge, at the foot of the Lake, Haweswater may be conveniently visited. Haweswater is a lesser Ullswater, with this advantage, that it remains undefiled by the intrusion of bad taste.

Lowther Castle is about four miles from Pooley Bridge, and, if during this Tour the Stranger has complained, as he will have had reason to do, of a want of majestic trees, he may be abundantly recompensed for his loss in the far-spreading woods which surround that

mansion. Visitants, for the most part, see little of the beauty of these magnificent grounds, being content with the view from the Terrace; but the whole course of the Lowther, from Askham to the bridge under Brougham Hall, presents almost at every step some new feature of river, woodland, and rocky landscape. A portion of this tract has, from its beauty, acquired the name of the Elysian Fields;—but the course of the stream can only be followed by the pedestrian.

NOTE.—*Vide* p. 12.—About 200 yards beyond the last house on the Keswick side of Rydal village the road is cut through a low wooded rock, called Thrang Crag. The top of it, which is only a few steps on the south side, affords the best view of the Vale which is to be had by a Traveller who confines himself to the public road. W. W.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENERY OF THE LAKES

SECTION FIRST

VIEW OF THE COUNTRY AS FORMED BY NATURE

AT Lucerne, in Switzerland, is shewn a Model of the Alpine country which encompasses the Lake of the four Cantons. The Spectator ascends a little platform, and sees mountains, lakes, glaciers, rivers, woods, waterfalls, and vallies, with their cottages, and every other object contained in them, lying at his feet; all things being represented in their appropriate colours. It may be easily conceived that this exhibition affords an exquisite delight to the imagination, tempting it to wander at will from valley to valley, from mountain to mountain, through the deepest recesses of the Alps. But it supplies also a more substantial pleasure; for the sublime and beautiful region, with all its hidden

treasures, and their bearings and relations to each other, is thereby comprehended and understood at once.

Something of this kind, without touching upon minute details and individualities which would only confuse and embarrass, will here be attempted, in respect to the Lakes in the north of England, and the vales and mountains enclosing and surrounding them. The delineation, if tolerably executed, will, in some instances, communicate to the traveller, who has already seen the objects, new information; and will assist in giving to his recollections a more orderly arrangement than his own opportunities of observing may have permitted him to make; while it will be still more useful to the future traveller, by directing his attention at once to distinctions in things which, without such previous aid, a length of time only could enable him to discover. It is hoped, also, that this Essay may become generally serviceable, by leading to habits of more exact and considerate observation than, as far as the writer knows, have hitherto been applied to local scenery.

To begin, then, with the main outlines of the country; —I know not how to give the reader a distinct image of these more readily, than by requesting him to place himself with me, in imagination, upon some given point; let it be the top of either of the mountains, Great Gavel,[1] or Scawfell; or, rather, let us suppose our station to be a cloud hanging midway between those two mountains, at not more than half a mile's distance from the summit of each, and not many yards above their highest elevation; we shall then see stretched at our feet a number of vallies, not fewer than eight, diverging from the point, on which we are supposed to stand, like spokes from the nave of a wheel. First, we note, lying to the south-east, the vale of Langdale,[2] which will conduct the eye to

[1] Now always called Great Gable.—Ed.

[2] Anciently spelt Langden, and so called by the old inhabitants to this day—*dean*, from which the latter part of the word is derived, being in many parts of England a name for a valley.—W. W. 1822.

the long lake of Winandermere, stretched nearly to the sea; or rather to the sands of the vast bay of Morcamb, serving here for the rim of this imaginary wheel;—let us trace it in a direction from the south-east towards the south, and we shall next fix our eyes upon the vale of Coniston, running up likewise from the sea, but not (as all the other vallies do) to the nave of the wheel, and therefore it may be not inaptly represented as a broken spoke sticking in the rim. Looking forth again, with an inclination towards the west, we see immediately at our feet the vale of Duddon, in which is no lake, but a copious stream, winding among fields, rocks, and mountains, and terminating its course in the sands of Duddon. The fourth vale, next to be observed, viz. that of the Esk, is of the same general character as the last, yet beautifully discriminated from it by peculiar features. Its stream passes under the woody steep upon which stands Muncaster Castle, the ancient seat of the Penningtons, and after forming a short and narrow æstuary enters the sea below the small town of Ravenglass. Next, almost due west, look down into, and along the deep valley of Wastdale, with its little chapel and half a dozen neat dwellings scattered upon a plain of meadow and corn-ground intersected with stone walls apparently innumerable, like a large piece of lawless patch-work, or an array of mathematical figures, such as in the ancient schools of geometry might have been sportively and fantastically traced out upon sand. Beyond this little fertile plain lies, within a bed of steep mountains, the long, narrow, stern, and desolate lake of Wastdale; and, beyond this, a dusky tract of level ground conducts the eye to the Irish Sea. The stream that issues from Wast-water is named the Irt, and falls into the æstuary of the river Esk. Next comes in view Ennerdale, with its lake of bold and somewhat savage shores. Its stream, the Ehen or Enna, flowing through a soft and fertile country, passes the town of Egremont, and the ruins of the castle,—then, seeming, like the

other rivers, to break through the barrier of sand thrown up by the winds on this tempestuous coast, enters the Irish Sea. The vale of Buttermere, with the lake and village of that name, and Crummock-water, beyond, next present themselves. We will follow the main stream, the Coker, through the fertile and beautiful vale of Lorton, till it is lost in the Derwent, below the noble ruins of Cockermouth Castle. Lastly, Borrowdale, of which the vale of Keswick is only a continuation, stretching due north, brings us to a point nearly opposite to the vale of Winandermere with which we began. From this it will appear, that the image of a wheel, thus far exact, is little more than one half complete; but the deficiency on the eastern side may be supplied by the vales of Wytheburn, Ullswater, Haweswater, and the vale of Grasmere and Rydal; none of these, however, run up to the central point between Great Gavel and Scawfell. From this, hitherto our central point, take a flight of not more than four or five miles eastward to the ridge of Helvellyn, and you will look down upon Wytheburn and St. John's Vale, which are a branch of the vale of Keswick; upon Ullswater, stretching due east:—and not far beyond to the south-east (though from this point not visible) lie the vale and lake of Haweswater; and lastly, the vale of Grasmere, Rydal, and Ambleside, brings you back to Winandermere, thus completing, though on the eastern side in a somewhat irregular manner, the representative figure of the wheel.

Such, concisely given, is the general topographical view of the country of the Lakes in the north of England; and it may be observed, that, from the circumference to the centre, that is, from the sea or plain country to the mountain stations specified, there is—in the several ridges that enclose these vales, and divide them from each other, I mean in the forms and surfaces, first of the swelling grounds, next of the hills and rocks, and lastly of the mountains—an ascent of almost regular gradation, from elegance and richness, to their highest

point of grandeur and sublimity. It follows therefore from this, first, that these rocks, hills, and mountains, must present themselves to view in stages rising above each other, the mountains clustering together towards the central point; and next, that an observer familiar with the several vales, must, from their various position in relation to the sun, have had before his eyes every possible embellishment of beauty, dignity, and splendour, which light and shadow can bestow upon objects so diversified. For example, in the vale of Winandermere, if the spectator looks for gentle and lovely scenes, his eye is turned towards the south; if for the grand, towards the north: in the vale of Keswick, which (as hath been said) lies almost due north of this, it is directly the reverse. Hence, when the sun is setting in summer far to the north-west, it is seen, by the spectator from the shores or breast of Winandermere, resting among the summits of the loftiest mountains, some of which will perhaps be half or wholly hidden by clouds, or by the blaze of light which the orb diffuses around it; and the surface of the lake will reflect before the eye correspondent colours through every variety of beauty, and through all degrees of splendour. In the vale of Keswick, at the same period, the sun sets over the humbler regions of the landscape, and showers down upon *them* the radiance which at once veils and glorifies, —sending forth, meanwhile, broad streams of rosy, crimson, purple, or golden light, towards the grand mountains in the south and south-east, which, thus illuminated, with all their projections and cavities, and with an intermixture of solemn shadows, are seen distinctly through a cool and clear atmosphere. Of course, there is as marked a difference between the *noontide* appearance of these two opposite vales. The bedimming haze that overspreads the south, and the clear atmosphere and determined shadows of the clouds in the north, at the same time of the day, are each seen in these several vales, with a contrast as striking. The reader will

easily conceive in what degree the intermediate vales partake of a kindred variety.

I do not indeed know any tract of country in which, within so narrow a compass, may be found an equal variety in the influences of light and shadow upon the sublime or beautiful features of landscape; and it is owing to the combined circumstances to which the reader's attention has been directed. From a point between Great Gavel and Scawfell, a shepherd would not require more than an hour to descend into any one of eight of the principal vales by which he would be surrounded; and all the others lie (with the exception of Hawswater) at but a small distance. Yet, though clustered together, every valley has its distinct and separate character: in some instances, as if they had been formed in studied contrast to each other, and in others with the united pleasing differences and resemblances of a sisterly rivalship. This concentration of interest gives to the country a decided superiority over the most attractive districts of Scotland and Wales, especially for the pedestrian traveller. In Scotland and Wales are found, undoubtedly, individual scenes, which, in their several kinds, cannot be excelled. But, in Scotland, particularly, what long tracts of desolate country intervene! so that the traveller, when he reaches a spot deservedly of great celebrity, would find it difficult to determine how much of his pleasure is owing to excellence inherent in the landscape itself; and how much to an instantaneous recovery from an oppression left upon his spirits by the barrenness and desolation through which he has passed.

But to proceed with our survey;—and, first, of the MOUNTAINS. Their *forms* are endlessly diversified, sweeping easily or boldly in simple majesty, abrupt and precipitous, or soft and elegant. In magnitude and grandeur they are individually inferior to the most celebrated of those in some other parts of this island; but, in the combinations which they make, towering

above each other, or lifting themselves in ridges like the waves of a tumultuous sea, and in the beauty and variety of their surfaces and colours, they are surpassed by none.

The general *surface* of the mountains is turf, rendered rich and green by the moisture of the climate. Sometimes the turf, as in the neighbourhood of Newlands, is little broken, the whole covering being soft and downy pasturage. In other places rocks predominate; the soil is laid bare by torrents and burstings of water from the sides of the mountains in heavy rains; and not unfrequently their perpendicular sides are seamed by ravines (formed also by rains and torrents) which, meeting in angular points, entrench and scar the surface with numerous figures like the letters W and Y.

In the ridge that divides Eskdale from Wastdale, granite is found; but the MOUNTAINS are for the most part composed of the stone by mineralogists termed schist, which, as you approach the plain country, gives place to limestone and freestone; but schist being the substance of the mountains, the predominant *colour* of their *rocky* parts is bluish, or hoary grey—the general tint of the lichens with which the bare stone is encrusted. With this blue or grey colour is frequently intermixed a red tinge, proceeding from the iron that interveins the stone, and impregnates the soil. The iron is the principle of decomposition in these rocks; and hence, when they become pulverized, the elementary particles crumbling down, overspread in many places the steep and almost precipitous sides of the mountains with an intermixture of colours, like the compound hues of a dove's neck. When in the heat of advancing summer, the fresh green tint of the herbage has somewhat faded, it is again revived by the appearance of the fern profusely spread over the same ground: and, upon this plant, more than upon anything else, do the changes which the seasons make in the colouring of the mountains depend. About the first week in October, the

rich green, which prevailed through the whole summer, is usually passed away. The brilliant and various colours of the fern are then in harmony with the autumnal woods; bright yellow or lemon colour, at the base of the mountains, melting gradually, through orange, to a dark russet brown towards the summits, where the plant, being more exposed to the weather, is in a more advanced state of decay. Neither heath nor furze are *generally* found upon the *sides* of these mountains, though in many places they are adorned by those plants, so beautiful when in flower. We may add, that the mountains are of height sufficient to have the surface towards the summit softened by distance, and to imbibe the finest aërial hues. In common also with other mountains, their apparent forms and colours are perpetually changed by the clouds and vapours which float round them: the effect indeed of mist or haze, in a country of this character, is like that of magic. I have seen six or seven ridges rising above each other, all created in a moment by the vapours upon the side of a mountain, which, in its ordinary appearance, shewed not a projecting point to furnish even a hint for such an operation.

I will take this opportunity of observing, that they who have studied the appearances of Nature feel that the superiority, in point of visual interest, of mountainous over other countries—is more strikingly displayed in winter than in summer. This, as must be obvious, is partly owing to the *forms* of the mountains, which, of course, are not affected by the seasons; but also, in no small degree, to the greater variety that exists in their winter than their summer *colouring*. This variety is such, and so harmoniously preserved, that it leaves little cause of regret when the splendour of autumn is passed away. The oak-coppices, upon the sides of the mountains, retain russet leaves; the birch stands conspicuous with its silver stem and puce-coloured twigs; the hollies, with green leaves and scarlet berries, have come forth to

view from among the deciduous trees, whose summer foliage had concealed them; the ivy is now plentifully apparent upon the stems and boughs of the trees, and upon the steep rocks. In place of the deep summer-green of the herbage and fern, many rich colours play into each other over the surface of the mountains; turf (the tints of which are interchangeably tawny-green, olive, and brown), beds of withered fern, and grey rocks, being harmoniously blended together. The mosses and lichens are never so fresh and flourishing as in winter, if it be not a season of frost; and their minute beauties prodigally adorn the foreground. Wherever we turn, we find these productions of Nature, to which winter is rather favourable than unkindly, scattered over the walls, banks of earth, rocks, and stones, and upon the trunks of trees, with the intermixture of several species of small fern, now green and fresh; and, to the observing passenger, their forms and colours are a source of inexhaustible admiration. Add to this the hoar-frost and snow, with all the varieties they create, and which volumes would not be sufficient to describe. I will content myself with one instance of the colouring produced by snow, which may not be uninteresting to painters. It is extracted from the memorandum-book of a friend; and for its accuracy I can speak, having been an eye-witness of the appearance. "I observed," says he, "the beautiful effect of the drifted snow upon the mountains, and the perfect *tone* of colour. From the top of the mountains downwards a rich olive was produced by the powdery snow and the grass, which olive was warmed with a little brown, and in this way harmoniously combined, by insensible gradations, with the white. The drifting took away the monotony of snow; and the whole vale of Grasmere, seen from the terrace walk in Easedale, was as varied, perhaps more so, than even in the pomp of autumn. In the distance was Loughrigg-Fell, the basin-wall of the lake; this, from the summit downward, was a rich orange-olive; then the lake of a bright olive-green, nearly the

same tint as the snow-powdered mountain tops and high slopes in Easedale ; and lastly, the church, with its firs, forming the centre of the view. Next to the church came nine distinguishable hills, six of them with woody sides turned towards us, all of them oak-copses with their bright red leaves and snow-powdered twigs ; these hills —so variously situated in relation to each other, and to the view in general, so variously powdered, some only enough to give the herbage a rich brown tint, one intensely white and lighting up all the others—were yet so placed, as in the most inobtrusive manner to harmonise by contrast with a perfectly naked snowless bleak summit in the far distance."

Having spoken of the forms, surface, and colour of the mountains, let us descend into the VALES. Though these have been represented under the general image of the spokes of a wheel, they are, for the most part, winding ; the windings of many being abrupt and intricate. And, it may be observed, that, in one circumstance, the general shape of them all has been determined by that primitive conformation through which so many became receptacles of lakes. For they are not formed, as are most of the celebrated Welsh vallies, by an approximation of the sloping bases of the opposite mountains towards each other, leaving little more between than a channel for the passage of a hasty river ; but the bottom of these vallies is mostly a spacious and gently declining area, apparently level as the floor of a temple, or the surface of a lake, and broken in many cases, by rocks and hills, which rise up like islands from the plain. In such of the vallies as make many windings, these level areas open upon the traveller in succession, divided from each other sometimes by a mutual approximation of the hills, leaving only passage for a river, sometimes by corresponding windings, without such approximation ; and sometimes by a bold advance of one mountain towards that which is opposite it. It may here be observed with propriety that the several rocks and hills, which have been de-

scribed as rising up like islands from the level area of the vale, have regulated the choice of the inhabitants in the situation of their dwellings. Where none of these are found, and the inclination of the ground is not sufficiently rapid easily to carry off the waters (as in the higher part of Langdale, for instance), the houses are not sprinkled over the middle of the vales, but confined to their sides, being placed merely so far up the mountain as to be protected from the floods. But where these rocks and hills have been scattered over the plain of the vale (as in Grasmere, Donnerdale, Eskdale, etc.), the beauty which they give to the scene is much heightened by a single cottage, or cluster of cottages, that will be almost always found under them, or upon their sides; dryness and shelter having tempted the Dalesmen to fix their habitations there.

I shall now speak of the LAKES of this country. The form of the lake is most perfect when, like Derwentwater, and some of the smaller lakes, it least resembles that of a river;—I mean, when being looked at from any given point where the whole may be seen at once, the width of it bears such proportion to the length, that, however the outline may be diversified by far-receding bays, it never assumes the shape of a river, and is contemplated with that placid and quiet feeling which belongs peculiarly to the lake—as a body of still water under the influence of no current; reflecting therefore the clouds, the light, and all the imagery of the sky and surrounding hills; expressing also and making visible the changes of the atmosphere, and motions of the lightest breeze, and subject to agitation only from the winds—

> The visible scene
> Would enter unawares into his mind
> With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
> Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
> Into the bosom of the *steady* lake![1]

[1] See *The Prelude*, book v. ll. 384-388.—ED.

It must be noticed, as a favourable characteristic of the lakes of this country, that, though several of the largest, such as Winandermere, Ullswater, Haweswater, do, when the whole length of them is commanded from an elevated point, lose somewhat of the peculiar form of the lake, and assume the resemblance of a magnificent river; yet, as their shape is winding (particularly that of Ullswater and Haweswater), when the view of the whole is obstructed by those barriers which determine the windings, and the spectator is confined to one reach, the appropriate feeling is revived; and one lake may thus in succession present to the eye the essential characteristic of many. But, though the forms of the large lakes have this advantage, it is nevertheless favourable to the beauty of the country that the largest of them are comparatively small; and that the same vale generally furnishes a succession of lakes, instead of being filled with one. The vales in North Wales, as hath been observed, are not formed for the reception of lakes; those of Switzerland, Scotland, and this part of the North of England, *are* so formed; but, in Switzerland and Scotland, the proportion of diffused water is often too great, as at the lake of Geneva for instance, and in most of the Scotch lakes. No doubt it sounds magnificent and flatters the imagination, to hear at a distance of expanses of water so many leagues in length and miles in width; and such ample room may be delightful to the fresh-water sailor, scudding with a lively breeze amid the rapidly-shifting scenery. But, who ever travelled along the banks of Loch-Lomond, variegated as the lower part is by islands, without feeling that a speedier termination of the long vista of blank water would be acceptable; and without wishing for an interposition of green meadows, trees, and cottages, and a sparkling stream to run by his side? In fact, a notion of grandeur, as connected with magnitude, has seduced persons of taste into a general mistake upon this subject. It is much more desirable, for the purposes of pleasure, that lakes should be numerous, and small or middle-

sized, than large, not only for communication by walks and rides, but for variety, and for recurrence of similar appearances. To illustrate this by one instance:—how pleasing is it to have a ready and frequent opportunity of watching, at the outlet of a lake, the stream pushing its way among the rocks in lively contrast with the stillness from which it has escaped; and how amusing to compare its noisy and turbulent motions with the gentle playfulness of the breezes, that may be starting up or wandering here and there over the faintly-rippled surface of the broad water! I may add, as a general remark, that, in lakes of great width, the shores cannot be distinctly seen at the same time, and therefore contribute little to mutual illustration and ornament; and, if the opposite shores are out of sight of each other, like those of the American and Asiatic lakes, then unfortunately the traveller is reminded of a nobler object; he has the blankness of a sea-prospect without the grandeur and accompanying sense of power.

As the comparatively small size of the lakes in the North of England is favourable to the production of variegated landscape, their *boundary-line* also is for the most part gracefully or boldly indented. That uniformity which prevails in the primitive frame of the lower grounds among all chains or clusters of mountains where large bodies of still water are bedded, is broken by the *secondary* agents of Nature, ever at work to supply the deficiencies of the mould in which things were originally cast. Using the word *deficiencies*, I do not speak with reference to those stronger emotions which a region of mountains is peculiarly fitted to excite. The bases of those huge barriers may run for a long space in straight lines, and these parallel to each other; the opposite sides of a profound vale may ascend as exact counterparts, or in mutual reflection, like the billows of a troubled sea; and the impression be, from its very simplicity, more awful and sublime. Sublimity is the result of Nature's first great dealings with the superficies of the Earth; but

the general tendency of her subsequent operations is towards the production of beauty; by a multiplicity of symmetrical parts uniting in a consistent whole. This is everywhere exemplified along the margins of these lakes. Masses of rock, that have been precipitated from the heights into the area of waters, lie in some places like stranded ships; or have acquired the compact structure of jutting piers; or project in little peninsulas crested with native wood. The smallest rivulet—one whose silent influx is scarcely noticeable in a season of dry weather—so faint is the dimple made by it on the surface of the smooth lake—will be found to have been not useless in shaping, by its deposits of gravel and soil in time of flood, a curve that would not otherwise have existed. But the more powerful brooks, encroaching upon the level of the lake, have, in course of time, given birth to ample promontories of sweeping outline that contrast boldly with the longitudinal base of the steeps on the opposite shore; while their flat or gently-sloping surfaces never fail to introduce, into the midst of desolation and barrenness, the elements of fertility, even where the habitations of men may not have been raised. These alluvial promontories, however, threaten, in some places, to bisect the waters which they have long adorned; and, in course of ages, they will cause some of the lakes to dwindle into numerous and insignificant pools; which, in their turn, will finally be filled up. But, checking these intrusive calculations, let us rather be content with appearances as they are, and pursue in imagination the meandering shores, whether rugged steeps, admitting of no cultivation, descend into the water; or gently-sloping lawns and woods, or flat and fertile meadows stretch between the margin of the lake and the mountains. Among minuter recommendations will be noticed, especially along bays exposed to the setting-in of strong winds, the curved rim of fine blue gravel, thrown up in course of time by the waves, half of it perhaps gleaming from under the water, and the corresponding half of a

lighter hue ; and in other parts bordering the lake, groves, if I may so call them, of reeds and bulrushes ; or plots of water-lilies lifting up their large target-shaped leaves to the breeze, while the white flower is heaving upon the wave.

To these may naturally be added the birds that enliven the waters. Wild-ducks in spring-time hatch their young in the islands, and upon reedy shores ;—the sand-piper, flitting along the stony margins, by its restless note attracts the eye to motions as restless : [1]—upon some jutting rock, or at the edge of a smooth meadow, the stately heron may be descried with folded wings, that might seem to have caught their delicate hue from the blue waters, by the side of which she watches for her sustenance. In winter, the lakes are sometimes resorted to by wild swans ; and in that season habitually by widgeons, goldings, and other aquatic fowl of the smaller species. Let me be allowed the aid of verse to describe the evolutions which these visitants sometimes perform, on a fine day towards the close of winter.

> Mark how the feather'd tenants of the flood,
> With grace of motion that might scarcely seem
> Inferior to angelical, prolong
> Their curious pastime ! shaping in mid air
> (And sometimes with ambitious wing that soars
> High as the level of the mountain tops,)
> A circuit ampler than the lake beneath,
> Their own domain ;—but ever, while intent
> On tracing and retracing that large round,
> Their jubilant activity evolves
> Hundreds of curves and circlets, to and fro,

[1] Compare the *Lines, left upon a Seat in a Yew-Tree, which stands near the Lake of Esthwaite*, etc., l. 27—

> The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper,

and the earlier reading—

> The sand-lark, restless bird,
> Piping along the margin of the Lake,

with Charles Lamb's comment on the Lines. (See vol. i. p. 110.) —Ed.

Upward and downward, progress intricate
Yet unperplex'd, as if one spirit swayed
Their indefatigable flight.—'Tis done—
Ten times, or more, I fancied it had ceased;
But lo! the vanish'd company again
Ascending;—they approach—I hear their wings
Faint, faint at first, and then an eager sound,
Past in a moment—and as faint again!
They tempt the sun to sport amid their plumes;
They tempt the water, or the gleaming ice,
To shew them a fair image;—'tis themselves,
Their own fair forms, upon the glimmering plain,
Painted more soft and fair as they descend
Almost to touch;—then up again aloft,
Up with a sally and a flash of speed,
As if they scorn'd both resting-place and rest![1]

The ISLANDS, dispersed among these lakes, are neither so numerous nor so beautiful as might be expected from the account that has been given of the manner in which the level areas of the vales are so frequently diversified by rocks, hills, and hillocks, scattered over them; nor are they ornamented (as are several of the lakes in Scotland and Ireland) by the remains of castles or other places of defence; nor with the still more interesting ruins of religious edifices. Every one must regret that scarcely a vestige is left of the Oratory, consecrated to the Virgin, which stood upon Chapel-Holm in Windermere, and that the Chauntry has disappeared, where mass used to be sung, upon St. Herbert's Island, Derwent-water. The islands of the last-mentioned lake are neither fortunately placed nor of pleasing shape: but if the wood upon them were managed with more taste, they might become interesting features in the landscape. There is a beautiful cluster on Winandermere; a pair pleasingly contrasted upon Rydal; nor must the solitary green island of Grasmere be forgotten. In the bosom of each of the lakes of Ennerdale

[1] This is an extract from the first canto of *The Recluse*, entitled "Home at Grasmere," ll. 204-230.—ED.

and Devockwater is a single rock, which owing to its neighbourhood to the sea, is—

The haunt of cormorants and sea-mews' clang,

a music well suited to the stern and wild character of the several scenes! [It may be worth while here to mention (not as an object of beauty, but of curiosity) that there occasionally appears above the surface of Derwent-water, and always in the same place, a considerable tract of spongy ground covered with aquatic plants, which is called the Floating, but with more propriety might be named the Buoyant, Island;[1] and, on one of the pools near the lake of Esthwaite, may sometimes be seen a mossy Islet, with trees upon it, shifting about before the wind, a *lusus naturæ* frequent on the great rivers of America, and not unknown in other parts of the world.

fas habeas invisere Tiburis arva,
Albuneæque lacum, atque umbras terrasque natantes.[2]]

This part of the subject may be concluded with observing—that, from the multitude of brooks and torrents that fall into these lakes, and of internal springs by which they are fed, and which circulate through them like veins, they are truly living lakes, "*vivi lacus*"; and are thus discriminated from the stagnant and sullen pools frequent among mountains that have been formed by volcanoes, and from the shallow meres found in flat and fenny countries. The water is also of crystalline purity; so that, if it were not for the reflections of the incumbent mountains by which it is darkened, a delusion might be felt, by a person resting quietly in a boat on the bosom of Winandermere or Derwent-water, similar to that which Carver so beautifully describes when he was floating

[1] Compare Dorothy Wordsworth's poem called *Floating Island*. —Ed.

[2] See that admirable Idyllium, the Catillus and Salia, of Landor. —W. W.

See "Idyllia Heroica Decem." Id. viii. *Catillus et Salia*. The whole passage within square brackets was added in 1835.—Ed.

alone in the middle of lake Erie or Ontario, and could almost have imagined that his boat was suspended in an element as pure as air, or rather that the air and water were one.

Having spoken of Lakes I must not omit to mention, as a kindred feature of this country, those bodies of still water called TARNS. In the economy of Nature these are useful, as auxiliars to Lakes ; for if the whole quantity of water which falls upon the mountains in time of storm were poured down upon the plains without intervention, in some quarters, of such receptacles, the habitable grounds would be much more subject than they are to inundation. But, as some of the collateral brooks spend their fury, finding a free course toward and also down the channel of the main stream of the vale before those that have to pass through the higher tarns and lakes have filled their several basins, a gradual distribution is effected ; and the waters thus reserved, instead of uniting, to spread ravage and deformity, with those which meet with no such detention, contribute to support, for a length of time, the vigour of many streams without a fresh fall of rain. Tarns are found in some of the vales, and are numerous upon the mountains. A Tarn, in a *Vale*, implies, for the most part, that the bed of the vale is not happily formed ; that the water of the brooks can neither wholly escape, nor diffuse itself over a large area. Accordingly, in such situations, Tarns are often surrounded by an unsightly tract of boggy ground ; but this is not always the case, and in the cultivated parts of the country, when the shores of the Tarn are determined, it differs only from the Lake in being smaller, and in belonging mostly to a smaller valley, or circular recess. Of this class of miniature lakes, Loughrigg Tarn, near Grasmere, is the most beautiful example. It has a margin of green firm meadows, of rocks, and rocky woods, a few reeds here, a little company of water-lilies there, with beds of gravel or stone beyond ; a tiny stream issuing neither briskly nor sluggishly out of it ; but its

feeding rills, from the shortness of their course, so small as to be scarcely visible. Five or six cottages are reflected in its peaceful bosom; rocky and barren steeps rise up above the hanging enclosures; and the solemn Pikes of Langdale overlook, from a distance, the low cultivated ridge of land that forms the northern boundary of this small, quiet, and fertile domain. The *mountain* Tarns can only be recommended to the notice of the inquisitive traveller who has time to spare. They are difficult of access and naked; yet some of them are, in their permanent forms, very grand; and there are accidents of things which would make the meanest of them interesting. At all events, one of these pools is an acceptable sight to the mountain wanderer; not merely as an incident that diversifies the prospect, but as forming in his mind a centre or conspicuous point to which objects, otherwise disconnected or insubordinated, may be referred. Some few have a varied outline, with bold heath-clad promontories; and—as they mostly lie at the foot of a steep precipice—the water, where the sun is not shining upon it, appears black and sullen; and, round the margin, huge stones and masses of rock are scattered; some defying conjecture as to the means by which they came thither; and others obviously fallen from on high—the contribution of ages! A not unpleasing sadness is induced by this perplexity, and these images of decay; while the prospect of a body of pure water unattended with groves and other cheerful rural images, by which fresh water is usually accompanied, and unable to give furtherance to the meagre vegetation around it—excites a sense of some repulsive power strongly put forth, and thus deepens the melancholy natural to such scenes. Nor is the feeling of solitude often more forcibly or more solemnly impressed than by the side of one of these mountain pools: though desolate and forbidding, it seems a distinct place to repair to; yet where the visitants must be rare, and there can be no disturbance. Water-fowl flock hither; and the lonely

angler may here be seen; but the imagination, not content with this scanty allowance of society, is tempted to attribute a voluntary power to every change which takes place in such a spot, whether it be the breeze that wanders over the surface of the water, or the splendid lights of evening resting upon it in the midst of awful precipices.

> There, sometimes does a leaping fish
> Send through the tarn a lonely cheer;
> The crags repeat the raven's croak
> In symphony austère:
> Thither the rainbow comes, the cloud,
> And mists that spread the flying shroud,
> And sunbeams, and the sounding blast.[1]

It will be observed that this country is bounded on the south and east by the sea, which combines beautifully, from many elevated points, with the inland scenery; and, from the bay of Morcamb, the sloping shores and back-ground of distant mountains are seen, composing pictures equally distinguished for amenity and grandeur. But the æstuaries on this coast are in a great measure bare at low water;[2] and there is no instance of the sea running far up among the mountains, and mingling with the Lakes, which are such in the strict and usual sense of the word, being of fresh water. Nor have the streams, from the shortness of their course, time to acquire that body of water necessary to confer upon them much majesty. In fact, the most considerable, while they continue in the mountain and lake-

[1] See the poem entitled *Fidelity*, in the "Poetical Works," vol. iii. p. 44.—Ed.

[2] In fact there is not an instance of a harbour on the Cumberland side of the Solway frith that is not dry at low water; that of Ravenglass, at the mouth of the Esk, as a natural harbour is much the best. The Sea appears to have been retiring slowly for ages from this coast. From Whitehaven to St. Bees extends a tract of level ground, about five miles in length, which formerly must have been under salt water, so as to have made an island of the high ground that stretches between it and the Sea.—W. W.

country, are rather large brooks than rivers. The water is perfectly pellucid, through which in many places are seen, to a great depth, their beds of rock, or of blue gravel, which give to the water itself an exquisitely cerulean colour: this is particularly striking in the rivers Derwent and Duddon, which may be compared, such and so various are their beauties, to any two rivers of equal length of course in any country. The number of the torrents and smaller brooks is infinite, with their water-falls and water-breaks; and they need not here be described. I will only observe that, as many, even of the smallest rills, have either found, or made for themselves, recesses in the sides of the mountains or in the vales, they have tempted the primitive inhabitants to settle near them for shelter; and hence, cottages so placed, by seeming to withdraw from the eye, are the more endeared to the feelings.

The WOODS consist chiefly of oak, ash, and birch, and here and there wych-elm, with underwood of hazel, the white and black thorn, and hollies; in moist places alders and willows abound; and yews among the rocks. Formerly the whole country must have been covered with wood to a great height up the mountains; where native Scotch firs[1] must have grown in great profusion, as they do in the northern part of Scotland to this day. But not one of these old inhabitants has existed, perhaps, for some hundreds of years; the beautiful traces, however, of the universal sylvan[2] appearance the country formerly had, yet survive in the native coppice-woods that have been protected by inclosures, and also in the forest-trees and hollies, which, though disappearing fast,

[1] This species of fir is in character much superior to the American which has usurped its place: Where the fir is planted for ornament, let it be by all means of the aboriginal species, which can only be procured from the Scotch Nurseries.—W. W.

[2] A squirrel (so I have heard the old people of Wytheburn say) might have gone from their chapel to Keswick without alighting on the ground.—W. W.

are yet scattered both over the inclosed and uninclosed parts of the mountains. The same is expressed by the beauty and intricacy with which the fields and coppice-woods are often intermingled: the plough of the first settlers having followed naturally the veins of richer, dryer, or less stony soil; and thus it has shaped out an intermixture of wood and lawn, with a grace and wildness which it would have been impossible for the hand of studied art to produce. Other trees have been introduced within these last fifty years, such as beeches, larches, limes, etc., and plantations of firs, seldom with advantage, and often with great injury to the appearance of the country; but the sycamore (which I believe was brought into this island from Germany, not more than two hundred years ago) has long been the favourite of the cottagers; and, with the fir, has been chosen to screen their dwellings: and is sometimes found in the fields whither the winds or the waters may have carried its seeds.

The want most felt, however, is that of timber trees. There are few *magnificent* ones to be found near any of the lakes; and unless greater care be taken, there will, in a short time, scarcely be left an ancient oak that would repay the cost of felling. The neighbourhood of Rydal, notwithstanding the havoc which has been made, is yet nobly distinguished. In the woods of Lowther, also, is found an almost matchless store of ancient trees, and the majesty and wildness of the native forest.

Among the smaller vegetable ornaments must be reckoned the bilberry, a ground plant, never so beautiful as in early spring, when it is seen under bare or budding trees, that imperfectly intercept the sun-shine, covering the rocky knolls with a pure mantle of fresh verdure, more lively than the herbage of the open fields;—the broom that spreads luxuriantly along rough pastures, and in the month of June interveins the steep copses with its golden blossoms;—and the juniper, a rich evergreen, that thrives in spite of cattle, upon the uninclosed parts of the mountains:—the Dutch myrtle diffuses

fragrance in moist places; and there is an endless variety of brilliant flowers in the fields and meadows, which, if the agriculture of the country were more carefully attended to, would disappear. Nor can I omit again to notice the lichens and mosses: their profusion, beauty, and variety, exceed those of any other country I have seen.

It may now be proper to say a few words respecting climate, and "skiey influences," in which this region, as far as the character of its landscapes is affected by them, may, upon the whole, be considered fortunate. The country is, indeed, subject to much bad weather, and it has been ascertained that twice as much rain falls here as in many parts of the island; but the number of black drizzling days, that blot out the face of things, is by no means *proportionally* great. Nor is a continuance of thick, flagging, damp air, so common as in the West of England and Ireland. The rain here comes down heartily, and is frequently succeeded by clear, bright weather, when every brook is vocal, and every torrent sonorous; brooks and torrents, which are never muddy, even in the heaviest floods, except, after a drought, they happen to be defiled for a short time by waters that have swept along dusty roads, or have broken out into ploughed fields. Days of unsettled weather, with partial showers, are very frequent; but the showers, darkening, or brightening, as they fly from hill to hill, are not less grateful to the eye than finely interwoven passages of gay and sad music are touching to the ear. Vapours exhaling from the lakes and meadows after sun-rise, in a hot season, or, in moist weather, brooding upon the heights, or descending towards the valleys with inaudible motion, give a visionary character to everything around them; and are in themselves so beautiful, as to dispose us to enter into the feelings of those simple nations (such as the Laplanders of this day), by whom they are taken for guardian deities of the mountains; or to sympathise with others who have fancied these delicate

apparitions to be the spirits of their departed ancestors. Akin to these are fleecy clouds resting upon the hill-tops; they are not easily managed in picture, with their accompaniments of blue sky; but how glorious are they in Nature! how pregnant with imagination for the poet! and the height of the Cumbrian mountains is sufficient to exhibit daily and hourly instances of those mysterious attachments.[1] Such clouds, cleaving to their stations, or lifting up suddenly their glittering heads from behind rocky barriers, or hurrying out of sight with speed of the sharpest edge—will often tempt an inhabitant to congratulate himself on belonging to a country of mists and clouds and storms, and make him think of the blank sky of Egypt, and of the cerulean vacancy of Italy, as an unanimated and even a sad spectacle. The atmosphere, however, as in every country subject to much rain, is frequently unfavourable to landscape, especially when keen winds succeed the rain, which are apt to produce coldness, spottiness, and an unmeaning or repulsive detail in the distance;—a sunless frost, under a canopy of leaden and shapeless clouds, is, as far as it allows things to be seen, equally disagreeable.

It has been said that in human life there are moments worth ages. In a more subdued tone of sympathy may we affirm, that in the climate of England there are, for the lover of Nature, days which are worth whole months, —I might say—even years. One of these favoured days sometimes occurs in spring-time, when that soft air is breathing over the blossoms and new-born verdure, which inspired Buchanan with his beautiful Ode to the first of May; the air, which, in the luxuriance of his fancy, he likens to that of the golden age,—to that which gives motion to the funereal cypresses on the banks of Lethe;—to the air which is to salute beatified spirits when expiatory fires shall have consumed the earth with all her habitations. But it is in autumn that days of

[1] Compare, in the "Poetical Works," *An Evening Walk*, vol. i. pp. 18-20, ll. 192-211, and note to l. 207.—ED.

such affecting influence most frequently intervene ;—the atmosphere seems refined, and the sky rendered more crystalline, as the vivifying heat of the year abates ; the lights and shadows are more delicate ; the colouring is richer and more finely harmonized ; and, in this season of stillness, the ear being unoccupied, or only gently excited, the sense of vision becomes more susceptible of its appropriate enjoyments. A resident in a country like this which we are treating of, will agree with me, that the presence of a lake is indispensable to exhibit in perfection the beauty of one of these days ; and he must have experienced, while looking on the unruffled waters, that the imagination, by their aid, is carried into recesses of feeling otherwise impenetrable. The reason of this is, that the heavens are not only brought down into the bosom of the earth, but that the earth is mainly looked at, and thought of, through the medium of a purer element. The happiest time is when the equinoxial gales are departed ; but their fury may probably be called to mind by the sight of a few shattered boughs, whose leaves do not differ in colour from the faded foliage of the stately oaks from which these relics of the storm depend : all else speaks of tranquillity ;—not a breath of air, no restlessness of insects, and not a moving object perceptible—except the clouds gliding in the depths of the lake, or the traveller passing along, an inverted image, whose motion seems governed by the quiet of a time, to which its archetype, the living person, is, perhaps, insensible :—or it may happen, that the figure of one of the larger birds, a raven or a heron, is crossing silently among the reflected clouds, while the voice of the real bird, from the element aloft, gently awakens in the spectator the recollection of appetites and instincts, pursuits and occupations, that deform and agitate the world,—yet have no power to prevent Nature from putting on an aspect capable of satisfying the most intense cravings for the tranquil, the lovely, and the perfect, to which man, the noblest of her creatures, is subject.

Thus far, of climate, as influencing the feelings through its effect on the objects of sense. We may add, that whatever has been said upon the advantages derived to these scenes from a changeable atmosphere, would apply, perhaps still more forcibly, to their appearance under the varied solemnities of night. Milton, it will be remembered, has given a *clouded* moon to Paradise itself. In the night-season also, the narrowness of the vales, and comparative smallness of the lakes, are especially adapted to bring surrounding objects home to the eye and to the heart. The stars, taking their stations above the hill-tops, are contemplated from a spot like the Abyssinian recess of Rasselas, with much more touching interest than they are likely to excite when looked at from an open country with ordinary undulations; and it must be obvious, that it is the *bays* only of large lakes that can present such contrasts of light and shadow as those of smaller dimensions display from every quarter. A deep contracted valley, with diffused waters, such a valley and plains level and wide as those of Chaldea, are the two extremes in which the beauty of the heavens and their connexion with the earth are most sensibly felt. Nor do the advantages I have been speaking of imply here an exclusion of the aerial effects of distance. These are insured by the height of the mountains, and are found, even in the narrowest vales, where they lengthen in perspective, or act (if the expression may be used) as telescopes for the open country.

The subject would bear to be enlarged upon: but I will conclude this section with a night-scene suggested by the Vale of Keswick. The Fragment is well known; but it gratifies me to insert it, as the Writer was one of the first who led the way to a worthy admiration of this country.

> Now sunk the sun, now twilight sunk, and night
> Rode in her zenith; not a passing breeze
> Sigh'd to the grove, which in the midnight air
> Stood motionless, and in the peaceful floods

Inverted hung : for now the billows slept
Along the shore, nor heav'd the deep ; but spread
A shining mirror to the moon's pale orb,
Which, dim and waning, o'er the shadowy cliffs,
The solemn woods, and spiry mountain tops,
Her glimmering faintness threw : now every eye,
Oppress'd with toil, was drown'd in deep repose,
Save that the unseen Shepherd in his watch,
Propp'd on his crook, stood listening by the fold,
And gaz'd the starry vault, and pendant moon ;
Nor voice, nor sound, broke on the deep serene ;
But the soft murmur of swift-gushing rills,
Forth issuing from the mountain's distant steep,
(Unheard till now, and now scarce heard) proclaim'd
All things at rest, and imag'd the still voice
Of quiet, whispering in the ear of Night.[1]

Section Second

ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY, AS AFFECTED BY ITS INHABITANTS

HITHERTO I have chiefly spoken of the features by which Nature has discriminated this country from others. I will now describe, in general terms, in what manner it is indebted to the hand of man. What I have to notice

[1] Dr. Brown, the author of this fragment, was from his infancy brought up in Cumberland, and should have remembered that the practice of folding sheep by night is unknown among these mountains, and that the image of the Shepherd upon the watch is out of its place, and belongs only to countries, with a warmer climate, that are subject to ravages from beasts of prey. It is pleasing to notice a dawn of imaginative feeling in these verses. Tickel, a man of no common genius, chose, for the subject of a Poem, Kensington Gardens, in preference to the Banks of the Derwent, within a mile or two of which he was born. But this was in the reign of Queen Anne, or George the first. Progress must have been made in the interval ; though the traces of it, except in the works of Thomson and Dyer, are not very obvious.—W. W.

Compare the reference to this Dr. Brown in a note to *An Evening Walk*, in the "Poetical Works," vol. i. p. 11.—Ed.

on this subject will emanate most easily and perspicuously from a description of the ancient and present inhabitants, their occupations, their condition of life, the distribution of landed property among them, and the tenure by which it is holden.

The reader will suffer me here to recall to his mind the shapes of the vallies, and their position with respect to each other, and the forms and substance of the intervening mountains. He will people the vallies with lakes and rivers: the coves and sides of the mountains with pools and torrents; and will bound half of the circle which we have contemplated by the sands of the sea, or by the sea itself. He will conceive that, from the point upon which he stood, he looks down upon this scene before the country had been penetrated by any inhabitants:—to vary his sensations, and to break in upon their stillness, he will form to himself an image of the tides visiting and re-visiting the friths, the main sea dashing against the bolder shore, the rivers pursuing their course to be lost in the mighty mass of waters. He may see or hear in fancy the wind sweeping over the lakes, or piping with a loud voice among the mountain peaks; and, lastly, may think of the primeval woods shedding and renewing their leaves with no human eye to notice, or human heart to regret or welcome the change. "When the first settlers entered this region (says an animated writer) they found it overspread with wood; forest trees, the fir, the oak, the ash, and the birch had skirted the fells, tufted the hills, and shaded the vallies through centuries of silent solitude; the birds and beasts of prey reigned over the meeker species; and the *bellum inter omnia* maintained the balance of Nature in the empire of beasts."

Such was the state and appearance of this region when the aboriginal colonists of the Celtic tribes were first driven or drawn towards it, and became joint tenants with the wolf, the boar, the wild bull, the red deer, and the leigh, a gigantic species of deer which has

been long extinct; while the inaccessible crags were occupied by the falcon, the raven, and the eagle. The inner parts were too secluded, and of too little value, to participate much of the benefit of Roman manners; and though these conquerors encouraged the Britons to the improvement of their lands in the plain country of Furness and Cumberland, they seem to have had little connection with the mountains, except for military purposes, or in subservience to the profit they drew from the mines.

When the Romans retired from Great Britain, it is well known that these mountain-fastnesses furnished a protection to some unsubdued Britons, long after the more accessible and more fertile districts had been seized by the Saxon or Danish invader. A few, though distinct, traces of Roman forts or camps, as at Ambleside, and upon Dunmallet, and a few circles of rude stones attributed to the Druids,[1] are the only vestiges that

[1] It is not improbable that these circles were once numerous, and that many of them may yet endure in a perfect state, under no very deep covering of soil. A friend of the Author, while making a trench in a level piece of ground, not far from the banks of the Emont, but in no connection with that river, met with some stones which seemed to him formally arranged; this excited his curiosity, and proceeding, he uncovered a perfect circle of stones, from two to three or four feet high, with a *sanctum sanctorum*,—the whole a complete place of Druidical worship of small dimensions, having the same sort of relation to Stonehenge, Long Meg and her Daughters near the river Eden, and Karl Lofts near Shap (if this last be not Danish), that a rural chapel bears to a stately church, or to one of our noble cathedrals. This interesting little monument having passed, with the field in which it was found, into other hands, has been destroyed. It is much to be regretted, that the striking relic of antiquity at Shap has been in a great measure destroyed also.

The DAUGHTERS of LONG MEG are placed not in an oblong, as the STONES of SHAP, but in a perfect circle, eighty yards in diameter, and seventy-two in number,* and from above three yards high, to less than so many feet: a little way out of the circle stands LONG MEG herself—a single stone eighteen feet high.

When the Author first saw this monument, he came upon it by surprise, therefore might over-rate its importance as an object; but

* Sixty-seven is the number usually counted.—ED.

remain upon the surface of the country, of these ancient occupants ; and, as the Saxons and Danes, who succeeded to the possession of the villages and hamlets which had been established by the Britons, seem at first to have confined themselves to the open country,—we may descend at once to times long posterior to the conquest by the Normans, when their feudal polity was regularly established. We may easily conceive that these narrow dales and mountain sides, choaked up as they must have been with wood, lying out of the way of communication with other parts of the Island, and upon the edge of a hostile kingdom, could have little attraction for the high-born and powerful ; especially as the more open parts of the country furnished positions for castles and houses of defence, sufficient to repel any of those sudden attacks, which, in the then rude state of military knowledge, could be made upon them. Accordingly, the more retired regions (and to such I am now confining myself) must have been neglected or shunned even by the persons whose baronial or signioral rights extended over them, and left, doubtless, partly as a place of refuge for outlaws and

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he must say, that though it is not to be compared with Stonehenge, he has not seen any other remains of those dark ages, which can pretend to rival it in singularity and dignity of appearance.

> A weight of awe not easy to be borne
> Fell suddenly upon my spirit, cast
> From the dread bosom of the unknown past,
> When first I saw that Sisterhood forlorn ;—
> And Her, whose strength and stature seem to scorn
> The power of years—pre-eminent, and placed
> Apart, to overlook the circle vast.
> Speak, Giant-mother ! tell it to the Morn,
> While she dispels the cumbrous shades of night ,
> Let the Moon hear, emerging from a cloud,
> When, how, and wherefore, rose on British ground
> That wondrous Monument, whose mystic round
> Forth shadows, some have deemed, to mortal sight
> The inviolable God that tames the proud.—W. W.*

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* See, in the "Poetical Works," vol. vii. p. 390, No. xliii. of the poems *Composed, or suggested, during a Tour in the Summer of* 1833.—ED.

robbers, and partly granted out for the more settled habitation of a few vassals following the employment of shepherds or woodlanders. Hence these lakes and inner vallies are unadorned by any remains of ancient grandeur, castles, or monastic edifices, which are only found upon the skirts of the country, as Furness Abbey, Calder Abbey, the Priory of Lannercost, Gleaston Castle, —long ago a residence of the Flemings,—and the numerous ancient castles of the Cliffords, the Lucys, and the Dacres. On the southern side of these mountains (especially in that part known by the name of Furness Fells, which is more remote from the borders), the state of society would necessarily be more settled; though it also was fashioned, not a little, by its neighbourhood to a hostile kingdom. We will, therefore, give a sketch of the economy of the Abbots in the distribution of lands among their tenants, as similar plans were doubtless adopted by other Lords, and as the consequences have affected the face of the country materially to the present day, being, in fact, one of the principal causes which give it such a striking superiority, in beauty and interest, over all other parts of the island.

"When the Abbots of Furness," says an author before cited, "enfranchised their villains, and raised them to the dignity of customary tenants, the lands, which they had cultivated for their lord, were divided into whole tenements; each of which, besides the customary annual rent, was charged with the obligation of having in readiness a man completely armed for the king's service on the borders, or elsewhere; each of these whole tenements was again subdivided into four equal parts; each villain had one; and the party tenant contributed his share to the support of the man of arms, and of other burdens. These divisions were not properly distinguished; the land remained mixed; each tenant had a share through all the arable and meadow-land, and common of pasture over all the wastes. These sub-tenements were judged sufficient for the support of so

many families; and no further division was permitted. These divisions and sub-divisions were convenient at the time for which they were calculated: the land, so parcelled out, was of necessity more attended to, and the industry greater, when more persons were to be supported by the produce of it. The frontier of the kingdom, within which Furness was considered, was in a constant state of attack and defence; more hands, therefore, were necessary to guard the coast, to repel an invasion from Scotland, or make reprisals on the hostile neighbour. The dividing the lands in such manner as has been shown, increased the number of inhabitants, and kept them at home till called for: and, the land being mixed, and the several tenants united in equipping the plough, the absence of the fourth man was no prejudice to the cultivation of his land, which was committed to the care of three.

"While the villains of Low Furness were thus distributed over the land, and employed in agriculture; those of High Furness were charged with the care of flocks and herds, to protect them from the wolves which lurked in the thickets, and in winter to browse them with the tender sprouts of hollies and ash. This custom was not till lately discontinued in High Furness; and holly-trees were carefully preserved for that purpose when all other wood was cleared off; large tracts of common being so covered with these trees, as to have the appearance of a forest of hollies. At the Shepherd's call, the flocks surrounded the holly-bush, and received the croppings at his hand, which they greedily nibbled up, bleating for more. The Abbots of Furness enfranchised these pastoral vassals, and permitted them to enclose *quillets* to their houses, for which they paid encroachment rent."—West's *Antiquities of Furness*.

However desirable, for the purposes of defence, a numerous population might be, it was not possible to make at once the same numerous allotments among the untilled vallies, and upon the sides of the mountains, as

had been made in the cultivated plains. The enfranchised shepherd, or woodlander, having chosen there his place of residence, builds it of sods, or of the mountain-stone, and, with the permission of his lord, encloses, like Robinson Crusoe, a small croft or two immediately at his door for such animals as he wishes to protect. Others are happy to imitate his example, and avail themselves of the same privileges: and thus a population, mainly of Danish or Norse origin, as the dialect indicates, crept on towards the more secluded parts of the vallies. Chapels, daughters of some distant mother-church, are first erected in the more open and fertile vales, as those of Bowness and Grasmere, offsets of Kendal: which again, after a period, as the settled population increases, become mother churches to smaller edifices, planted, at length, in almost every dale throughout the country. The enclosures, formed by the tenantry, are for a long time confined to the home-steads; and the arable and meadow land of the vales is possessed in common field; the several portions being marked out by stones, bushes, or trees; which portions, where the custom has survived, to this day are called *dales*, from the word *deylen*, to distribute: but, while the valley was thus lying open, enclosures seem to have taken place upon the sides of the mountains; because the land there was not intermixed, and was of little comparative value; and, therefore, small opposition would be made to its being appropriated by those to whose habitations it was contiguous. Hence the singular appearance which the sides of many of these mountains exhibit, intersected as they are, almost to the summit, with stone walls. When first erected, these stone fences must have little disfigured the face of the country; as part of the lines would every where be hidden by the quantity of native wood then remaining, and the lines would also be broken (as they still are) by the rocks which interrupt and vary their course. In the meadows, and in those parts of the lower grounds where the soil has not been sufficiently drained, and could not afford a

stable foundation, there, when the increasing value of land, and the inconvenience suffered from intermixed plots of ground in common field, had induced each inhabitant to enclose his own, they were compelled to make the fences of alders, willows, and other trees. These, where the native wood had disappeared, have frequently enriched the vallies with a sylvan appearance ; while the intricate intermixture of property has given to the fences a graceful irregularity, which, where large properties are prevalent, and large capitals employed in agriculture, is unknown. This sylvan appearance is heightened by the number of ash-trees planted in rows along the quick fences, and along the walls, for the purpose of browsing the cattle at the approach of winter. The branches are lopped off and strewn upon the pastures ; and when the cattle have stripped them of the leaves, they are used for repairing the hedges or for fuel.

We have thus seen a numerous body of Dalesmen creeping into possession of their home-steads, their little crofts, their mountain-enclosures ; and, finally, the whole vale is visibly divided ; except, perhaps, here and there some marshy ground, which, till fully drained, would not repay the trouble of enclosing. But these last partitions do not seem to have been general, till long after the pacification of the Borders, by the union of the two crowns : when the cause, which had first determined the distribution of land into such small parcels, had not only ceased,—but likewise a general improvement had taken place in the country, with a correspondent rise in the value of its produce. From the time of the union, it is certain that this species of feudal population must rapidly have diminished. That it was formerly much more numerous than it is at present, is evident from the multitude of tenements (I do not mean houses, but small divisions of land) which belonged formerly each to a several proprietor, and for which separate fines are paid to the manorial lord at this day. These are often in the proportion of four to one of the present occupants. "Sir

Launcelot Threlkeld, who lived in the reign of Henry VII., was wont to say, he had three noble houses, one for pleasure, Crosby, in Westmoreland, where he had a park full of deer; one for profit and warmth, wherein to reside in winter, namely, Yanwith, nigh Penrith; and the third, Threlkeld, (on the edge of the vale of Keswick), well stocked with tenants to go with him to the wars." But, as I have said, from the union of the two crowns, this numerous vassalage (their services not being wanted) would rapidly diminish; various tenements would be united in one possessor; and the aboriginal houses, probably little better than hovels, like the kraels of savages, or the huts of the Highlanders of Scotland, would fall into decay, and the places of many be supplied by substantial and comfortable buildings, a majority of which remain to this day scattered over the vallies, and are often the only dwellings found in them.

From the time of the erection of these houses, till within the last sixty years, the state of society, though no doubt slowly and gradually improving, underwent no material change. Corn was grown in these vales (through which no carriage-road had yet been made) sufficient upon each estate to furnish bread for each family, and no more; notwithstanding the union of several tenements, the possessions of each inhabitant still being small, in the same field was seen an intermixture of different crops; and the plough was interrupted by little rocks, mostly overgrown with wood, or by spongy places, which the tillers of the soil had neither leisure nor capital to convert into firm land. The storms and moisture of the climate induced them to sprinkle their upland property with outhouses of native stone, as places of shelter for their sheep, where, in tempestuous weather, food was distributed to them. Every family spun from its own flock the wool with which it was clothed; a weaver was here and there found among them; and the rest of their wants was supplied by the produce of the yarn, which they carded and spun in their own houses, and carried to

market, either under their arms, or more frequently on pack-horses, a small train taking their way weekly down the valley or over the mountains to the most commodious town. They had, as I have said, their rural chapel, and of course their minister, in clothing or in manner of life, in no respect differing from themselves, except on the Sabbath-day; this was the sole distinguished individual among them; every thing else, person and possession, exhibited a perfect equality, a community of shepherds and agriculturists, proprietors, for the most part, of the lands which they occupied and cultivated.

While the process above detailed was going on, the native forest must have been every where receding; but trees were planted for the sustenance of the flocks in winter,—such was then the rude state of agriculture; and, for the same cause, it was necessary that care should be taken of some part of the growth of the native woods. Accordingly, in Queen Elizabeth's time, this was so strongly felt, that a petition was made to the Crown, praying, "that the Blomaries in High Furness might be abolished, on account of the quantity of wood which was consumed in them for the use of the mines, to the great detriment of the cattle." But this same cause, about a hundred years after, produced effects directly contrary to those which had been deprecated. The re-establishment, at that period, of furnaces upon a large scale, made it the interest of the people to convert the steeper and more stony of the enclosures, sprinkled over with remains of the native forest, into close woods, which, when cattle and sheep were excluded, rapidly sowed and thickened themselves. The reader's attention has been directed to the cause by which tufts of wood, pasturage, meadow, and arable land, with its various produce, are intricately intermingled in the same field; and he will now see, in like manner, how enclosures entirely of wood, and those of cultivated ground, are blended all over the country under a law of similar wildness.

An historic detail has thus been given of the manner in which the hand of man has acted upon the surface of the inner regions of this mountainous country, as incorporated with and subservient to the powers and processes of Nature. We will now take a view of the same agency —acting, within narrower bounds, for the production of the few works of art and accommodations of life which, in so simple a state of society, could be necessary. These are merely habitations of man and coverts for beasts, roads and bridges, and places of worship.

And to begin with the COTTAGES. They are scattered over the vallies, and under the hill sides, and on the rocks; and, even to this day, in the more retired dales, without any intrusion of more assuming buildings;

> Cluster'd like stars some few, but single most,
> And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
> Or glancing on each other cheerful looks,
> Like separated stars with clouds between.—MS.[1]

The dwelling-houses, and contiguous outhouses, are, in many instances, of the colour of the native rock, out of which they have been built; but, frequently the Dwelling or Fire-house, as it is ordinarily called, has been distinguished from the barn or byre by rough-cast and white wash, which, as the inhabitants are not hasty in renewing it, in a few years acquires, by the influence of weather, a tint at once sober and variegated. As these houses have been, from father to son, inhabited by persons engaged in the same occupations, yet necessarily with changes in their circumstances, they have received without incongruity additions and accommodations adapted to the needs of each successive occupant, who, being for the most part proprietor, was at liberty to follow his own fancy: so that these humble dwellings remind the contemplative spectator of a production of Nature, and may (using a strong expression) rather be

[1] From the canto of *The Recluse* entitled "Home at Grasmere," ll. 122-125.—ED.

said to have grown than to have been erected ;—to have risen, by an instinct of their own, out of the native rock —so little is there in them of formality, such is their wildness and beauty. Among the numerous recesses and projections in the walls and in the different stages of their roofs, are seen bold and harmonious effects of contrasted sunshine and shadow. It is a favourable circumstance, that the strong winds, which sweep down the vallies, induced the inhabitants, at a time when the materials for building were easily procured, to furnish many of these dwellings with substantial porches ; and such as have not this defence, are seldom unprovided with a projection of two large slates over their thresholds. Nor will the singular beauty of the chimneys escape the eye of the attentive traveller. Sometimes a low chimney, almost upon a level with the roof, is overlaid with a slate, supported upon four slender pillars, to prevent the wind from driving the smoke down the chimney. Others are of a quadrangular shape, rising one or two feet above the roof; which low square is often surmounted by a tall cylinder, giving to the cottage chimney the most beautiful shape in which it is ever seen. Nor will it be too fanciful or refined to remark, that there is a pleasing harmony between a tall chimney of this circular form, and the living column of smoke, ascending from it through the still air. These dwellings, mostly built, as has been said, of rough unhewn stone, are roofed with slates, which were rudely taken from the quarry before the present art of splitting them was understood, and are, therefore, rough and uneven in their surface, so that both the coverings and sides of the houses have furnished places of rest for the seeds of lichens, mosses, ferns, and flowers. Hence buildings, which in their very form call to mind the processes of Nature, do thus, clothed in part with a vegetable garb, appear to be received into the bosom of the living principle of things, as it acts and exists among the woods and fields ; and, by their colour and their shape, affect-

ingly direct the thoughts to that tranquil course of Nature and simplicity, along which the humble-minded inhabitants have, through so many generations, been led. Add the little garden with its shed for bee-hives, its small bed of pot-herbs, and its borders and patches of flowers for Sunday posies, with sometimes a choice few too much prized to be plucked; an orchard of proportioned size; a cheese press, often supported by some tree near the door; a cluster of embowering sycamores for summer shade; with a tall fir, through which the winds sing when other trees are leafless; the little rill or household spout murmuring in all seasons;—combine these incidents and images together, and you have the representative idea of a mountain-cottage in this country so beautifully formed in itself, and so richly adorned by the hand of Nature.

Till within the last sixty years there was no communication between any of these vales by carriage roads; all bulky articles were transported on pack-horses. Owing, however, to the population not being concentrated in villages, but scattered, the vallies themselves were intersected as now by innumerable lanes and pathways leading from house to house and from field to field. These lanes, where they are fenced by stone walls, are mostly bordered with ashes, hazels, wild roses, and beds of tall fern at their base; while the walls themselves, if old, are overspread with mosses, small ferns, wild strawberries, the geranium, and lichens; and, if the wall happen to rest against a bank of earth, it is sometimes almost wholly concealed by a rich facing of stone-fern. It is a great advantage to a traveller or resident, that these numerous lanes and paths, if he be a zealous admirer of Nature, will lead him on into all the recesses of the country, so that the hidden treasures of its landscapes may, by an ever-ready guide, be laid open to his eyes.

Likewise to the smallness of the several properties is owing the great number of bridges over the brooks and

torrents, and the daring and graceful neglect of danger or accommodation with which so many of them are constructed, the rudeness of the forms of some, and their endless variety. But, when I speak of this rudeness, I must at the same time add, that many of these structures are in themselves models of elegance, as if they had been formed upon principles of the most thoughtful architecture. It is to be regretted that these monuments of the skill of our ancestors, and of that happy instinct by which consummate beauty was produced, are disappearing fast; but sufficient specimens remain[1] to give a high gratification to the man of genuine taste. Travellers who may not have been accustomed to pay attention to things so inobtrusive, will excuse me if I point out the proportion between the span and elevation of the arch, the lightness of the parapet, and the graceful manner in which its curve follows faithfully that of the arch.

Upon this subject I have nothing further to notice, except the PLACES OF WORSHIP, which have mostly a little school-house adjoining.[2] The architecture of these

[1] Written some time ago. The injury done since, is more than could have been calculated upon.

Singula de nobis anni prædantur euntes. This is in the course of things; but why should the genius that directed the ancient architecture of these vales have deserted them? For the bridges, churches, mansions, cottages, and their richly fringed and flat-roofed outhouses, venerable as the grange of some old abbey, have been substituted structures, in which baldness only seems to have been studied, or plans of the most vulgar utility. But some improvement may be looked for in future; the gentry *recently* have copied the old models, and successful instances might be pointed out, if I could take the liberty.—W. W.

[2] In some places scholars were formerly taught in the church, and at others the school-house was a sort of ante-chapel to the place of worship, being under the same roof; an arrangement which was abandoned as irreverent. It continues, however, to this day in Borrowdale. In the parish register of that chapelry is a notice, that a youth who had quitted the valley, and died in one of the towns on the coast of Cumberland, had requested that his body should be brought and interred at the foot of the pillar by which he had been accustomed to sit while a school-boy. One cannot

churches and chapels, where they have not been recently rebuilt or modernised, is of a style not less appropriate and admirable than that of the dwelling-houses and other structures. How sacred the spirit by which our forefathers were directed! The *religio loci* is no where violated by these unstinted, yet unpretending, works of human hands. They exhibit generally a well-proportioned oblong, with a suitable porch, in some instances a steeple tower, and in others nothing more than a small belfry, in which one or two bells hang visibly. But these objects, though pleasing in their forms, must necessarily, more than others in rural scenery, derive their interest from the sentiments of piety and reverence for the modest virtues and simple manners of humble life with which they may be contemplated. A man must be very insensible who would not be touched with pleasure at the sight of the chapel of Buttermere, so strikingly expressing, by its diminutive size, how small must be the congregation there assembled, as it were, like one family; and proclaiming at the same time to the passenger, in connection with the surrounding mountains, the depth of that seclusion in which the people live, that has rendered necessary the building of a separate place of worship for so few. A patriot, calling to mind the images of the stately fabrics of Canterbury, York, or Westminster, will find a heart-felt satisfaction in presence of this lowly pile, as a monument of the wise institutions of our country, and as evidence of the all-pervading and paternal care of that venerable Establishment, of which it is, perhaps, the humblest daughter. The edifice is scarcely larger than many of the single stones or fragments of rock which are scattered near it.

but regret that parish registers so seldom contain any thing but bare names; in a few of this country, especially in that of Lowes-water, I have found interesting notices of unusual natural occurrences—characters of the deceased, and particulars of their lives. There is no good reason why such memorials should not be frequent; these short and simple annals would in future ages become precious.—W. W.

We have thus far confined our observations, on this division of the subject, to that part of these Dales which runs up far into the mountains.

As we descend towards the open country, we meet with halls and mansions, many of which have been places of defence against the incursions of the Scottish Borderers; and they not unfrequently retain their towers and battlements. To these houses, parks are sometimes attached, and to their successive proprietors we chiefly owe whatever ornament is still left to the country of majestic timber. Through the open parts of the vales are scattered, also, houses of a middle rank between the pastoral cottage and the old hall residence of the knight or esquire. Such houses differ much from the rugged cottages before described, and are generally graced with a little court or garden in front, where may yet be seen specimens of those fantastic and quaint figures which our ancestors were fond of shaping out in yew-tree, holly, or box-wood. The passenger will sometimes smile at such elaborate display of petty art, while the house does not deign to look upon the natural beauty or the sublimity which its situation almost unavoidably commands.

Thus has been given a faithful description, the minuteness of which the reader will pardon, of the face of this country as it was, and had been through centuries, till within the last sixty years. Towards the head of these Dales was found a perfect Republic of Shepherds and Agriculturists, among whom the plough of each man was confined to the maintenance of his own family, or to the occasional accommodation of his neighbour.[1] Two

[1] One of the most pleasing characteristics of manners in secluded and thinly-peopled districts, is a sense of the degree in which human happiness and comfort are dependent on the contingency of neighbourhood. This is implied by a rhyming adage common here, "*Friends are far, when neighbours are nar*" (near). This mutual helpfulness is not confined to out-of-doors work; but is ready upon all occasions. Formerly, if a person became sick, especially the mistress of a family, it was usual for those of the

or three cows furnished each family with milk and cheese. The chapel was the only edifice that presided over these dwellings, the supreme head of this pure Commonwealth ; the members of which existed in the midst of a powerful empire, like an ideal society or an organised community, whose constitution had been imposed and regulated by the mountains which protected it. Neither high-born nobleman, knight, nor esquire, was here ; but many of these humble sons of the hills had a consciousness that the land, which they walked over and tilled, had for more than five hundred years been possessed by men of their name and blood : and venerable was the transition, when a curious traveller, descending from the heart of the mountains, had come to some ancient manorial residence in the more open parts of the Vales, which, through the rights attached to its proprietor, connected the almost visionary mountain republic he had been contemplating with the substantial frame of society as existing in the laws and constitution of a mighty empire.

Section Third

CHANGES, AND RULES OF TASTE FOR PREVENTING THEIR BAD EFFECTS

SUCH, as hath been said, was the appearance of things till within the last sixty years. A practice, denominated Ornamental Gardening, was at that time becoming prevalent over England. In union with an admiration of this art, and in some instances in opposition to it, had been generated a relish for select parts of natural scenery : and Travellers, instead of confining their observations to Towns, Manufactories, or Mines, began (a thing till

neighbours who were more particularly connected with the party by amicable offices, to visit the house, carrying a present ; this practice, which is by no means obsolete, is called *owning* the family, and is regarded as a pledge of a disposition to be otherwise serviceable in a time of disability and distress.—W. W.

then unheard of) to wander over the island in search of sequestered spots, distinguished as they might accidentally have learned, for the sublimity or beauty of the forms of Nature there to be seen.—Dr. Brown, the celebrated Author of the *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, published a letter to a friend, in which the attractions of the Vale of Keswick were delineated with a powerful pencil, and the feeling of a genuine Enthusiast. Gray, the Poet, followed: he died soon after his forlorn and melancholy pilgrimage to the Vale of Keswick, and the record left behind him of what he had seen and felt in this journey, excited that pensive interest with which the human mind is ever disposed to listen to the farewell words of a man of genius. The journal of Gray feelingly showed how the gloom of ill health and low spirits had been irradiated by objects, which the Author's powers of mind enabled him to describe with distinctness and unaffected simplicity. Every reader of this journal must have been impressed with the words which conclude his notice of the Vale of Grasmere:—"Not a single red tile, no flaring gentleman's house or garden-wall, breaks in upon the repose of this little unsuspected paradise; but all is peace, rusticity, and happy poverty, in its neatest and most becoming attire."

What is here so justly said of Grasmere applied almost equally to all its sister Vales. It was well for the undisturbed pleasures of the Poet that he had no forebodings of the change which was soon to take place; and it might have been hoped that these words, indicating how much the charm of what *was*, depended upon what was *not*, would of themselves have preserved the ancient franchises of this and other kindred mountain retirements from trespass; or (shall I dare to say?) would have secured scenes so consecrated from profanation. The Lakes had now become celebrated; visitors flocked hither from all parts of England; the fancies of some were smitten so deeply, that they became settlers; and the Islands of Derwentwater and Winandermere, as they

offered the strongest temptation, were the first places seized upon, and were instantly defaced by the intrusion.

The venerable wood that had grown for centuries round the small house called St. Herbert's Hermitage, had indeed some years before been felled by its native proprietor, and the whole island planted anew with Scotch firs, left to spindle up by each other's side—a melancholy phalanx, defying the power of the winds, and disregarding the regret of the spectator, who might otherwise have cheated himself into a belief, that some of the decayed remains of those oaks, the place of which was in this manner usurped, had been planted by the Hermit's own hand. This sainted spot, however, suffered comparatively little injury. At the bidding of an alien improver, the Hind's Cottage, upon Vicar's island, in the same lake, with its embowering sycamores and cattle-shed, disappeared from the corner where they stood ; and right in the middle, and upon the precise point of the island's highest elevation, rose a tall square habitation, with four sides exposed, like an astronomer's observatory, or a warren-house reared upon an eminence for the detection of depredators, or, like the temple of Æolus, where all the winds pay him obeisance. Round this novel structure, but at a respectful distance, platoons of firs were stationed, as if to protect their commander when weather and time should somewhat have shattered his strength. Within the narrow limits of this island were typified also the state and strength of a kingdom, and its religion as it had been, and was,—for neither was the druidical circle uncreated, nor the church of the present establishment ; nor the stately pier, emblem of commerce and navigation ; nor the fort to deal out thunder upon the approaching invader. The taste of a succeeding proprietor rectified the mistakes as far as was practicable, and has ridded the spot of its puerilities. The church, after having been docked of its steeple, is applied both ostensibly and really, to the purpose for which the body of the pile was actually erected, namely, a boat-house ;

the fort is demolished: and, without indignation on the part of the spirits of the ancient Druids who officiated at the circle upon the opposite hill, the mimic arrangement of stones, with its *sanctum sanctorum*, has been swept away.

The present instance has been singled out, extravagant as it is, because, unquestionably, this beautiful country has, in numerous other places, suffered from the same spirit, though not clothed exactly in the same form, nor active in an equal degree. It will be sufficient here to utter a regret for the changes that have been made upon the principal Island at Winandermere, and in its neighbourhood. What could be more unfortunate than the taste that suggested the paring of the shores, and surrounding with an embankment this spot of ground, the natural shape of which was so beautiful! An artificial appearance has thus been given to the whole, while infinite varieties of minute beauty have been destroyed. Could not the margin of this noble island be given back to Nature? Winds and waves work with a careless and graceful hand: and, should they in some places carry away a portion of the soil, the trifling loss would be amply compensated by the additional spirit, dignity, and loveliness, which these agents and the other powers of Nature would soon communicate to what was left behind. As to the larch-plantations upon the main shore,—they who remember the original appearance of the rocky steeps, scattered over with native hollies and ash-trees, will be prepared to agree with what I shall have to say hereafter upon plantations[1] in general.

But, in truth, no one can now travel through the more frequented tracts, without being offended, at almost every turn, by an introduction of discordant objects, disturbing that peaceful harmony of form and colour, which had been through a long lapse of ages most happily preserved.

[1] These are disappearing fast, under the management of the present Proprietor, and native wood is resuming its place.—W. W.

All gross transgressions of this kind originate, doubtless, in a feeling natural and honourable to the human mind, viz. the pleasure which it receives from distinct ideas, and from the perception of order, regularity, and contrivance. Now, unpractised minds receive these impressions only from objects that are divided from each other by strong lines of demarcation; hence the delight with which such minds are smitten by formality and harsh contrast. But I would beg of those who are eager to create the means of such gratification, first carefully to study what already exists; and they will find, in a country so lavishly gifted by Nature, an abundant variety of forms marked out with a precision that will satisfy their desires. Moreover, a new habit of pleasure will be formed opposite to this, arising out of the perception of the fine gradations by which in Nature one thing passes away into another, and the boundaries that constitute individuality disappear in one instance only to be revived elsewhere under a more alluring form. The hill of Dunmallet, at the foot of Ullswater, was once divided into different portions, by avenues of fir-trees, with a green and almost perpendicular lane descending down the steep hill through each avenue;—contrast this quaint appearance with the image of the same hill overgrown with self-planted wood, each tree springing up in the situation best suited to its kind, and with that shape which the situation constrained or suffered it to take. What endless melting and playing into each other of forms and colours does the one offer to a mind at once attentive and active; and how insipid and lifeless, compared with it, appear those parts of the former exhibition with which a child, a peasant perhaps, or a citizen unfamiliar with natural imagery, would have been most delighted!

The disfigurement which this country has undergone, has not, however, proceeded wholly from the common feelings of human nature which have been referred to as the primary sources of bad taste in rural imagery;

another cause must be added, that has chiefly shown itself in its effect upon buildings. I mean a warping of the natural mind occasioned by a consciousness that, this country being an object of general admiration, every new house would be looked at and commented upon either for approbation or censure. Hence all the deformity and ungracefulness that ever pursue the steps of constraint or affectation. Persons, who in Leicestershire or Northamptonshire would probably have built a modest dwelling like those of their sensible neighbours, have been turned out of their course; and, acting a part, no wonder if, having had little experience, they act it ill. The craving for prospect, also, which is immoderate, particularly in new settlers, has rendered it impossible that buildings, whatever might have been their architecture, should in most instances be ornamental to the landscape: rising as they do from the summits of naked hills in staring contrast to the snugness and privacy of the ancient houses.

No man is to be condemned for a desire to decorate his residence and possessions; feeling a disposition to applaud such an endeavour, I would show how the end may be best attained. The rule is simple; with respect to grounds—work, where you can, in the spirit of Nature, with an invisible hand of art. Planting, and a removal of wood, may thus, and thus only, be carried on with good effect; and the like may be said of building, if Antiquity, who may be styled the co-partner and sister of Nature, be not denied the respect to which she is entitled. I have already spoken of the beautiful forms of the ancient mansions of this country, and of the happy manner in which they harmonise with the forms of Nature. Why cannot such be taken as a model, and modern internal convenience be confined within their external grace and dignity. Expense to be avoided, or difficulties to be overcome, may prevent a close adherence to this model; still, however, it might be followed to a certain degree in the style of architecture and in

the choice of situation, if the thirst for prospect were mitigated by those considerations of comfort, shelter, and convenience, which used to be chiefly sought after. But should an aversion to old fashions unfortunately exist, accompanied with a desire to transplant into the cold and stormy North, the elegances of a villa formed upon a model taken from countries with a milder climate, I will adduce a passage from an English poet, the divine Spenser, which will show in what manner such a plan may be realised without injury to the native beauty of these scenes.

> Into that forest farre they thence him led,
> Where was their dwelling in a pleasant glade
> With MOUNTAINS round about environed,
> And MIGHTY WOODS which did the valley shade,
> And like a stately theatre it made,
> Spreading itself into a spacious plaine;
> And in the midst a little river plaide
> Emongst the puny stones which seem'd to 'plaine
> With gentle murmure that his course they did restraine.
>
> Beside the same a dainty place there lay,
> Planted with mirtle trees and laurels green,
> In which the birds sang many a lovely lay
> Of God's high praise, and of their sweet loves teene,
> As it an earthly paradise had beene;
> In whose *enclosed shadow* there was pight
> A fair pavillion, *scarcely to be seen*,
> The which was all within most richly dight,
> That greatest princes living it mote well delight.[1]

Houses or mansions suited to a mountainous region, should be "not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired"; and the reasons for this rule, though they have been little adverted to, are evident. Mountainous countries, more frequently and forcibly than others, remind us of the power of the elements, as manifested in winds, snows, and torrents, and accordingly make the notion of exposure very unpleasing; while shelter and comfort are in pro-

[1] See *The Faërie Queene*, book iii. s. 39, etc.—ED.

portion necessary and acceptable. Far-winding vallies difficult of access, and the feelings of simplicity habitually connected with mountain retirements, prompt us to turn from ostentation as a thing there eminently unnatural and out of place. A mansion, amid such scenes, can never have sufficient dignity or interest to become principal in the landscape, and to render the mountains, lakes, or torrents, by which it may be surrounded, a subordinate part of the view. It is, I grant, easy to conceive, that an ancient castellated building, hanging over a precipice or raised upon an island, or the peninsula of a lake, like that of Kilchurn Castle, upon Loch Awe, may not want, whether deserted or inhabited, sufficient majesty to preside for a moment in the spectator's thoughts over the high mountains among which it is embosomed; but its titles are from antiquity—a power readily submitted to upon occasion as the vicegerent of Nature: it is respected, as having owed its existence to the necessities of things, as a monument of security in times of disturbance and danger long passed away,—as a record of the pomp and violence of passion, and a symbol of the wisdom of law; it bears a countenance of authority, which is not impaired by decay.

> Child of loud-throated war, the mountain-stream
> Roars in thy hearing; but thy hour of rest
> Is come, and thou art silent in thy age![1]

To such honours a modern edifice can lay no claim; and the puny efforts of elegance appear contemptible, when, in such situations, they are obtruded in rivalship with the sublimities of Nature. But, towards the verge of a district like this of which we are treating, where the mountains subside into hills of moderate elevation, or in an undulating or flat country, a gentleman's mansion may, with propriety, become a principal feature in the

[1] See in the "Poetical Works," vol. ii. p. 401, *Memorials of a Tour in Scotland*, in 1803.—ED.

landscape; and, itself being a work of art, works and traces of artificial ornament may, without censure, be extended around it, as they will be referred to the common centre, the house; the right of which to impress within certain limits a character of obvious ornament will not be denied, where no commanding forms of Nature dispute it, or set it aside. Now, to a want of the perception of this difference, and to the causes before assigned, may chiefly be attributed the disfigurement which the Country of the Lakes has undergone, from persons who may have built, demolished, and planted, with full confidence, that every change and addition was or would become an improvement.

The principle that ought to determine the position, apparent size, and architecture of a house, viz. that it should be so constructed, and (if large) so much of it hidden, as to admit of its being gently incorporated into the scenery of Nature—should also determine its colour. Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say, "If you would fix upon the best colour for your house, turn up a stone, or pluck up a handful of grass by the roots, and see what is the colour of the soil where the house is to stand, and let that be your choice." Of course, this precept given in conversation, could not have been meant to be taken literally. For example, in Low Furness, where the soil, from its strong impregnation with iron, is universally of a deep red, if this rule were strictly followed, the house also must be of a glaring red; in other places it must be of a sullen black; which would only be adding annoyance to annoyance. The rule, however, as a general guide, is good: and, in agricultural districts, where large tracts of soil are laid bare by the plough, particularly if (the face of the country being undulating) they are held up to view, this rule, though not to be implicitly adhered to, should never be lost sight of;—the colour of the house ought, if possible, to have a cast or shade of the colour of the soil. The principle is, that the house must harmonise with the surrounding landscape: accordingly,

in mountainous countries, with still more confidence may it be said, "look at the rocks and those parts of the mountains where the soil is visible, and they will furnish a safe direction." Nevertheless, it will often happen that the rocks may bear so large a proportion to the rest of the landscape, and may be of such a tone of colour, that the rule may not admit, even here, of being implicitly followed. For instance, the chief defect in the colouring of the Country of the Lakes (which is most strongly felt in the summer season) is an over-prevalence of a bluish tint, which the green of the herbage, the fern, and the woods, does not sufficiently counteract. If a house, therefore, should stand where this defect prevails, I have no hesitation in saying, that the colour of the neighbouring rocks would not be the best that could be chosen. A tint ought to be introduced approaching nearer to those which, in the technical language of painters, are called *warm:* this, if happily selected, would not disturb, but would animate the landscape. How often do we see this exemplified upon a small scale by the native cottages, in cases where the glare of white-wash has been subdued by time and enriched by weather-stains! No harshness is then seen; but one of these cottages, thus coloured, will often form a central point to a landscape by which the whole shall be connected, and an influence of pleasure diffused over all the objects that compose the picture. But where the cold blue tint of the rocks is enriched by the iron tinge, the colour cannot be too closely imitated; and it will be produced of itself by the stones hewn from the adjoining quarry, and by the mortar, which may be tempered with the most gravelly part of the soil. The pure blue gravel, from the bed of the river, is, however, more suitable to the mason's purpose, who will probably insist also that the house must be covered with rough-cast, otherwise it cannot be kept dry; if this advice be taken, the builder of taste will set about contriving such means as may enable him to come the nearest to the effect aimed at.

The supposed necessity of rough-cast to keep out rain in houses not built of hewn stone or brick, has tended greatly to injure English landscape, and the neighbourhood of these Lakes especially, by furnishing such apt occasion for whitening buildings. That white should be a favourite colour for rural residences is natural for many reasons. The mere aspect of cleanliness and neatness thus given, not only to an individual house, but, where the practice is general, to the whole face of the country, produces moral associations so powerful, that, in many minds, they take place of all others. But what has already been said upon the subject of cottages, must have convinced men of feeling and imagination, that a human dwelling of the humblest class may be rendered more deeply interesting to the affections, and far more pleasing to the eye, by other influences, than a sprightly tone of colour spread over its outside. I do not, however, mean to deny, that a small white building, embowered in trees, may, in some situations, be a delightful and animating object—in no way injurious to the landscape; but this only where it sparkles from the midst of a thick shade, and in rare and solitary instances; especially if the country be itself rich and pleasing, and abound with grand forms. On the sides of bleak and desolate moors, we are indeed thankful for the sight of white cottages and white houses plentifully scattered, where, without these, perhaps everything would be cheerless: this is said, however, with hesitation, and with a wilful sacrifice of some higher enjoyments. But I have certainly seen such buildings glittering at sunrise, and in wandering lights, with no common pleasure. The continental traveller also will remember, that the convents hanging from the rocks of the Rhine, the Rhone, the Danube, or among the Apennines, or the mountains of Spain, are not looked at with less complacency when, as is often the case, they happen to be of a brilliant white. But this is perhaps owing, in no small degree, to the contrast of that lively colour with the gloom of monastic

life, and to the general want of rural residences of smiling and attractive appearance, in those countries.

The objections to white, as a colour, in large spots or masses in landscape, especially in a mountainous country, are insurmountable. In Nature, pure white is scarcely ever found but in small objects, such as flowers; or in those which are transitory, as the clouds, foam of rivers, and snow. Mr. Gilpin, who notices this, has also recorded the just remark of Mr. Locke, of N——, that white destroys the *gradations* of distance; and, therefore, an object of pure white can scarcely ever be managed with good effect in landscape-painting. Five or six white houses, scattered over a valley, by their obtrusiveness, dot the surface, and divide it into triangles, or other mathematical figures, haunting the eye, and disturbing that repose which might otherwise be perfect. I have seen a single white house materially impair the majesty of a mountain; cutting away, by a harsh separation, the whole of its base, below the point on which the house stood. Thus was the apparent size of the mountain reduced, not by the interposition of another object in a manner to call forth the imagination, which will give more than the eye loses; but what has been abstracted in this case was left visible; and the mountain appeared to take its beginning, or to rise, from the line of the house, instead of its own natural base. But, if I may express my own individual feeling, it is after sunset, at the coming on of twilight, that white objects are most to be complained of. The solemnity and quietness of Nature at that time are always marred, and often destroyed by them. When the ground is covered with snow, they are of course inoffensive; and in moonshine they are always pleasing—it is a tone of light with which they accord; and the dimness of the scene is enlivened by an object at once conspicuous and cheerful. I will conclude this subject with noticing, that the cold, slaty colour, which many persons, who have heard the white condemned, have adopted in its stead, must be

disapproved of for the reason already given. The flaring yellow runs into the opposite extreme, and is still more censurable. Upon the whole, the safest colour, for general use, is something between a cream and a dust-colour, commonly called stone colour:—there are, among the Lakes, examples of this that need not be pointed out.[1]

The principle taken as our guide, viz. that the house should be so formed, and of such apparent size and colour, as to admit of its being gently incorporated with the works of Nature, should also be applied to the management of the grounds and plantations, and is here more urgently needed: for it is from abuses in this department, far more even than from the introduction of exotics in architecture (if the phrase may be used), that this country has suffered. Larch and fir plantations have been spread, not merely with a view to profit, but in many instances for the sake of ornament. To those who plant for profit, and are thrusting every other tree out of the way, to make room for their favourite, the larch, I would utter first a regret, that they should have selected these lovely vales for their vegetable manufactory, when there is so much barren and irreclaimable land in the neighbouring moors, and in other parts of the island, which might have been had for this purpose at a far cheaper rate. And I will also beg leave to represent to them, that they ought not to be carried away by flattering promises from the speedy growth of this tree; because in rich soils and sheltered situations, the wood, though it thrives fast, is full of sap, and of little value; and is, likewise, very subject to ravage from the attacks of insects, and from blight. Accordingly, in Scotland, where planting is much better understood, and carried on upon an incomparably larger scale

[1] A proper colouring of houses is now becoming general. It is best that the colouring material should be mixed with the rough-cast, and not laid on as a *wash* afterwards.—W. W.

than among us, good soil and sheltered situations are appropriated to the oak, the ash, and other deciduous trees; and the larch is now generally confined to barren and exposed ground. There the plant, which is a hardy one, is of slower growth; much less liable to injury; and the timber is of better quality. But the circumstances of many permit, and their taste leads them, to plant with little regard to profit; and there are others, less wealthy, who have such a lively feeling of the native beauty of these scenes, that they are laudably not unwilling to make some sacrifices to heighten it. Both these classes of persons, I would entreat to enquire of themselves wherein that beauty which they admire consists. They would then see that, after the feeling has been gratified that prompts us to gather round our dwelling a few flowers and shrubs, which from the circumstances of their not being native, may, by their very looks, remind us that they owe their existence to our hands, and their prosperity to our care; they will see that, after this natural desire has been provided for, the course of all beyond has been predetermined by the spirit of the place. Before I proceed, I will remind those who are not satisfied with the restraint thus laid upon them, that they are liable to a charge of inconsistency, when they are so eager to change the face of that country, whose native attractions, by the act of erecting their habitations in it, they have so emphatically acknowledged. And surely there is not a single spot that would not have, if well managed, sufficient dignity to support itself, unaided by the productions of other climates, or by elaborate decorations which might be becoming elsewhere.

Having adverted to the feelings that justify the introduction of a few exotic plants, provided they be confined almost to the doors of the house, we may add, that a transition should be contrived, without abruptness, from these foreigners to the rest of the shrubs, which ought to be of the kinds scattered by Nature, through the

woods—holly, broom, wild-rose, elder, dogberry, white and black thorn, etc.,—either these only, or such as are carefully selected in consequence of their being united in form, and harmonising in colour with them, especially with respect to colour, when the tints are most diversified, as in autumn and spring. The various sorts of fruit-and-blossom-bearing trees usually found in orchards, to which may be added those of the woods,—namely, the wilding, black cherry tree, and wild cluster-cherry (here called heck-berry)—may be happily admitted as an intermediate link between the shrubs and the forest trees; which last ought almost entirely to be such as are natives of the country. Of the birch, one of the most beautiful of the native trees, it may be noticed, that, in dry and rocky situations, it outstrips even the larch, which many persons are tempted to plant merely on account of the speed of its growth. The Scotch fir is less attractive during its youth than any other plant; but, when full grown, if it has had room to spread out its arms, it becomes a noble tree; and, by those who are disinterested enough to plant for posterity, it may be placed along with the sycamore near the house; for, from their massiveness, both these trees unite well with buildings, and in some situations with rocks also; having, in their forms and apparent substances, the effect of something intermediate betwixt the immoveableness and solidity of stone, and the spray and foliage of the lighter trees. If these general rules be just, what shall we say to whole acres of artificial shrubbery and exotic trees among rocks and dashing torrents, with their own wild wood in sight—where we have the whole contents of the nurseryman's catalogue jumbled together—colour at war with colour, and form with form?—among the most peaceful subjects of Nature's kingdom, everywhere discord, distraction, and bewilderment! But this deformity, bad as it is, is not so obtrusive as the small patches and large tracts of larch-plantations that are overrunning the hill sides. To justify our condemnation

of these, let us again recur to Nature. The process, by which she forms woods and forests, is as follows. Seeds are scattered indiscriminately by winds, brought by waters, and dropped by birds. They perish, or produce, according as the soil and situation upon which they fall are suited to them: and under the same dependence, the seedling or the sucker, if not cropped by animals, (which Nature is often careful to prevent by fencing it about with brambles or other prickly shrubs) thrives, and the tree grows, sometimes single, taking its own shape without constraint, but for the most part compelled to conform itself to some law imposed upon it by its neighbours. From low and sheltered places, vegetation travels upwards to the more exposed; and the young plants are protected, and to a certain degree fashioned, by those that have preceded them. The continuous mass of foliage which would be thus produced, is broken by rocks, or by glades or open places, where the browsing of animals has prevented the growth of wood. As vegetation ascends, the winds begin also to bear their part in moulding the forms of the trees; but, thus mutually protected, trees, though not of the hardiest kind, are enabled to climb high up the mountains. Gradually, however, by the quality of the ground, and by increasing exposure, a stop is put to their ascent; the hardy trees only are left: those also, by little and little, give way—and a wild and irregular boundary is established, graceful in its outline, and never contemplated without some feeling, more or less distinct, of the powers of Nature by which it is imposed.

Contrast the liberty that encourages, and the law that limits, this joint work of Nature and Time, with the disheartening necessities, restrictions, and disadvantages, under which the artificial planter must proceed, even he whom long observation and fine feeling have best qualified for his task. In the first place his trees, however well chosen and adapted to their several situations, must generally start all at the same time; and

this necessity would of itself prevent that fine connection of parts, that sympathy and organisation, if I may so express myself, which pervades the whole of a natural wood, and appears to the eye in its single trees, its masses of foliage and their various colours, when they are held up to view on the side of a mountain; or when, spread over a valley, they are looked down upon from an eminence. It is therefore impossible, under any circumstances, for the artificial planter to rival the beauty of Nature. But a moment's thought will show that, if ten thousand of this spiky tree, the larch, are stuck in at once upon the side of a hill, they can grow up into nothing but deformity; that, while they are suffered to stand, we shall look in vain for any of those appearances which are the chief sources of beauty in a natural wood.

It must be acknowledged that the larch, till it has outgrown the size of a shrub, shows, when looked at singly, some elegance in form and appearance, especially in spring, decorated, as it then is, by the pink tassels of its blossoms; but, as a tree, it is less than any other pleasing: its branches (for *boughs* it has none) have no variety in the youth of the tree, and little dignity, even when it attains its full growth: *leaves* it cannot be said to have, consequently neither affords shade nor shelter. In spring the larch becomes green long before the native trees; and its green is so peculiar and vivid, that, finding nothing to harmonize with it, wherever it comes forth, a disagreeable speck is produced. In summer, when all other trees are in their pride, it is of a dingy, lifeless hue; in autumn of a spiritless unvaried yellow, and in winter it is still more lamentably distinguished from every other deciduous tree of the forest, for they seem only to sleep, but the larch appears absolutely dead. If an attempt be made to mingle thickets, or a certain proportion of other forest-trees, with the larch, its horizontal branches intolerantly cut them down as with a scythe, or force them to spindle up to keep pace with it.

The terminating spike renders it impossible that the several trees, where planted in numbers, should ever blend together so as to form a mass or masses of wood. Add thousands to tens of thousands, and the appearance is still the same—a collection of separate individual trees, obstinately presenting themselves as such; and which, from whatever point they are looked at, if but seen, may be counted upon the fingers. Sunshine, or shadow, has little power to adorn the surface of such a wood; and the trees not carrying up their heads, the wind raises among them no majestic undulations. It is indeed true, that, in countries where the larch is a native, and where, without interruption, it may sweep from valley to valley, and from hill to hill, a sublime image may be produced by such a forest, in the same manner as by one composed of any other single tree, to the spreading of which no limits can be assigned. For sublimity will never be wanting, where the sense of innumerable multitude is lost in, and alternates with that of intense unity; and to the ready perception of this effect, similarity and almost identity of individual form and monotony of colour contribute. But this feeling is confined to the native immeasurable forest; no artificial plantation can give it.

The foregoing observations will, I hope, (as nothing has been condemned or recommended without a substantial reason) have some influence upon those who plant for ornament merely. To such as plant for profit, I have already spoken. Let me then entreat that the native deciduous trees may be left in complete possession of the lower ground; and that plantations of larch, if introduced at all, may be confined to the highest and most barren tracts. Interposition of rocks would there break the dreary uniformity of which we have been complaining; and the winds would take hold of the trees, and imprint upon their shapes a wildness congenial to their situation.

Having determined what kinds of trees must be

wholly rejected, or at least very sparingly used, by those who are unwilling to disfigure the country; and having shown what kinds ought to be chosen; I should have given, if my limits had not already been overstepped, a few practical rules for the manner in which trees ought to be disposed in planting. But to this subject I should attach little importance, if I could succeed in banishing such trees as introduce deformity, and could prevail upon the proprietor to confine himself, either to those found in the native woods, or to such as accord with them. This is, indeed, the main point; for, much as these scenes have been injured by what has been taken from them—buildings, trees and woods, either through negligence, necessity, avarice, or caprice—it is not the removals, but the harsh *additions* that have been made, which are the worst grievance—a standing and unavoidable annoyance. Often have I felt this distinction, with mingled satisfaction and regret; for, if no positive deformity or discordance be substituted or superinduced, such is the benignity of Nature, that, take away from her beauty after beauty, and ornament after ornament, her appearance cannot be marred—the scars, if any be left, will gradually disappear before a healing spirit; and what remains will still be soothing and pleasing.—

> Many hearts deplored
> The fate of those old Trees; and oft with pain
> The traveller at this day will stop and gaze
> On wrongs which Nature scarcely seems to heed:
> For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
> And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
> And the green silent pastures, yet remain.[1]

There are few ancient woods left in this part of England upon which such indiscriminate ravage as is here "deplored," could now be committed. But, out of the

[1] See, in the "Poetical Works," vol. ii. p. 410, the *Sonnet composed at —— Castle* (included in the "Memorials of a Tour in Scotland, 1803").—ED.

numerous copses, fine woods might in time be raised, probably without sacrifice of profit, by leaving, at the periodical fellings, a due proportion of the healthiest trees to grow up into timber.—This plan has fortunately, in many instances, been adopted; and they, who have set the example, are entitled to the thanks of all persons of taste. As to the management of planting with reasonable attention to ornament, let the images of Nature be your guide, and the whole secret lurks in a few words; thickets or underwoods—single trees—trees clustered or in groups—groves—unbroken woods, but with varied masses of foliage—glades—invisible or winding boundaries—in rocky districts, a seemly proportion of rock left wholly bare, and other parts half hidden—disagreeable objects concealed, and formal lines broken—trees climbing up to the horizon, and, in some places, ascending from its sharp edge, in which they are rooted, with the whole body of the tree appearing to stand in the clear sky—in other parts, woods surmounted by rocks utterly bare and naked, which add to the sense of height, as if vegetation could not thither be carried, and impress a feeling of duration, power of resistance, and security from change!

The author has been induced to speak thus at length, by a wish to preserve the native beauty of this delightful district, because still further changes in its appearance must inevitably follow, from the change of inhabitants and owners which is rapidly taking place.—About the same time that strangers began to be attracted to the country, and to feel a desire to settle in it, the difficulty, that would have stood in the way of their procuring situations, was lessened by an unfortunate alteration in the circumstances of the native peasantry, proceeding from a cause which then began to operate, and is now felt in every house. The family of each man, whether *estatesman* or farmer, formerly had a twofold support; first, the produce of his lands and flocks; and, secondly, the profit drawn from the employment of the women and

children, as manufacturers; spinning their own wool in their own houses (work chiefly done in the winter season), and carrying it to market for sale. Hence, however numerous the children, the income of the family kept pace with its increase. But, by the invention and universal application of machinery, this second resource has been cut off; the gains being so far reduced, as not to be sought after but by a few aged persons disabled from other employment. Doubtless, the invention of machinery has not been to these people a pure loss; for the profits arising from home-manufactures operated as a strong temptation to choose that mode of labour in neglect of husbandry. They also participate in the general benefit which the island has derived from the increased value of the produce of land, brought about by the establishment of manufactories, and in the consequent quickening of agricultural industry. But this is far from making them amends; and now that home-manufactures are nearly done away, though the women and children might, at many seasons of the year, employ themselves with advantage in the fields beyond what they are accustomed to do, yet still all possible exertion in this way cannot be rationally expected from persons whose agricultural knowledge is so confined, and, above all, where there must necessarily be so small a capital. The consequence, then, is—that proprietors and farmers being no longer able to maintain themselves upon small farms, several are united in one, and the buildings go to decay, or are destroyed; and that the lands of the *estatesmen* being mortgaged, and the owners constrained to part with them, they fall into the hands of wealthy purchasers, who in like manner unite and consolidate; and, if they wish to become residents, erect new mansions out of the ruins of the ancient cottages, whose little enclosures, with all the wild graces that grew out of them, disappear. The feudal tenure under which the estates are held has indeed done something towards checking this influx of new settlers; but so strong is the

inclination, that these galling restraints are endured; and it is probable, that in a few years the country on the margin of the Lakes will fall almost entirely into the possession of gentry, either strangers or natives. It is then much to be wished, that a better taste should prevail among these new proprietors; and, as they cannot be expected to leave things to themselves, that skill and knowledge should prevent unnecessary deviations from that path of simplicity and beauty along which, without design and unconsciously, their humble predecessors have moved. In this wish the author will be joined by persons of pure taste throughout the whole island, who, by their visits (often repeated) to the Lakes in the North of England, testify that they deem the district a sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS

Mr. West, in his well-known Guide to the Lakes, recommends, as the best season for visiting this country, the interval from the beginning of June to the end of August; and, the two latter months being a time of vacation and leisure, it is almost exclusively in these that strangers resort hither. But that season is by no means the best; the colouring of the mountains and woods, unless where they are diversified by rocks, is of too unvaried a green; and, as a large portion of the vallies is allotted to hay-grass, some want of variety is found there also. The meadows, however, are sufficiently enlivened after haymaking begins, which is much later than in the southern part of the island. A stronger objection is rainy weather, setting in sometimes at this period with a vigour, and continuing with a perseverance, that may remind the disappointed and dejected traveller

of those deluges of rain which fall among the Abyssinian mountains, for the annual supply of the Nile. The months of September and October (particularly October) are generally attended with much finer weather; and the scenery is then, beyond comparison, more diversified, more splendid, and beautiful; but, on the other hand, short days prevent long excursions, and sharp and chill gales are unfavourable to parties of pleasure out of doors. Nevertheless, to the sincere admirer of Nature, who is in good health and spirits, and at liberty to make a choice, the six weeks following the 1st of September may be recommended in preference to July and August. For there is no inconvenience arising from the season which, to such a person, would not be amply compensated by the *autumnal* appearance of any of the more retired vallies, into which discordant plantations and unsuitable buildings have not yet found entrance.—In such spots, at this season, there is an admirable compass and proportion of natural harmony in colour, through the whole scale of objects; in the tender green of the after-grass upon the meadows, interspersed with islands of grey or mossy rock, crowned by shrubs and trees; in the irregular enclosures of standing corn, or stubble-fields, in like manner broken; in the mountain-sides glowing with fern of divers colours; in the calm blue lakes and river-pools; and in the foliage of the trees, through all the tints of autumn,—from the pale and brilliant yellow of the birch and ash, to the deep greens of the unfaded oak and alder, and of the ivy upon the rocks, upon the trees, and the cottages. Yet, as most travellers are either stinted, or stint themselves, for time, the space between the middle or last week in May, and the middle or last week of June, may be pointed out as affording the best combination of long days, fine weather, and variety of impressions. Few of the native trees are then in full leaf; but, for whatever may be wanting in depth of shade, more than an equivalent will be found in the diversity of foliage, in the blossoms of the fruit-and-

berry-bearing trees which abound in the woods, and in the golden flowers of the broom and other shrubs, with which many of the copses are interveined. In those woods, also, and on these mountain-sides which have a northern aspect, and in the deep dells, many of the spring-flowers still linger; while the open and sunny places are stocked with the flowers of the approaching summer. And, besides, is not an exquisite pleasure still untasted by him who has not heard the choir of linnets and thrushes chaunting their love-songs in the copses, woods, and hedge-rows of a mountainous country; safe from the birds of prey, which build in the inaccessible crags, and are at all hours seen or heard wheeling about in the air? The number of these formidable creatures is probably the cause, why, in the *narrow* vallies, there are no skylarks; as the destroyer would be enabled to dart upon them from the near and surrounding crags, before they could descend to their ground-nests for protection. It is not often that the nightingale resorts to these vales; but almost all the other tribes of our English warblers are numerous; and their notes, when listened to by the side of broad still waters, or when heard in unison with the murmuring of mountain-brooks, have the compass of their power enlarged accordingly. There is also an imaginative influence in the voice of the cuckoo, when that voice has taken possession of a deep mountain valley, very different from any thing which can be excited by the same sound in a flat country. Nor must a circumstance be omitted, which here renders the close of spring especially interesting; I mean the practice of bringing down the ewes from the mountains to yean in the vallies and enclosed grounds. The herbage being thus cropped as it springs, *that* first tender emerald green of the season, which would otherwise have lasted little more than a fortnight, is prolonged in the pastures and meadows for many weeks; while they are further enlivened by the multitude of lambs bleating and

skipping about. These sportive creatures, as they gather strength, are turned out upon the open mountains, and with their slender limbs, their snow-white colour, and their wild and light motions, beautifully accord or contrast with the rocks and lawns, upon which they must now begin to seek their food. And last, but not least, at this time the traveller will be sure of room and comfortable accommodation, even in the smaller inns. I am aware that few of those who may be inclined to profit by this recommendation will be able to do so, as the time and manner of an excursion of this kind are mostly regulated by circumstances which prevent an entire freedom of choice. It will therefore be more pleasant to observe, that, though the months of July and August are liable to many objections, yet it often happens that the weather, at this time, is not more wet and stormy than they, who are really capable of enjoying the sublime forms of Nature in their utmost sublimity, would desire. For no traveller, provided he be in good health, and with any command of time, would have a just privilege to visit such scenes, if he could grudge the price of a little confinement among them, or interruption in his journey, for the sight or sound of a storm coming on or clearing away. Insensible must he be who would not congratulate himself upon the bold bursts of sunshine, the descending vapours, wandering lights and shadows, and the invigorated torrents and water-falls, with which broken weather, in a mountainous region, is accompanied. At such a time there is no cause to complain, either of the monotony of midsummer colouring, or the glaring atmosphere of long, cloudless, and hot days.

Thus far concerning the respective advantages and disadvantages of the different seasons for visiting this country. As to the order in which objects are best seen—a lake being composed of water flowing from higher grounds, and expanding itself till its receptacle is filled to the brim,—it follows, that it will appear to most advantage when approached from its outlet, especially if

the lake be in a mountainous country; for, by this way of approach, the traveller faces the grander features of the scene, and is gradually conducted into its most sublime recesses. Now, every one knows, that from amenity and beauty the transition to sublimity is easy and favourable; but the reverse is not so; for, after the faculties have been elevated, they are indisposed to humbler excitement.[1]

It is not likely that a mountain will be ascended without disappointment, if a wide range of prospect be the object, unless either the summit be reached before sun-rise, or the visitant remain there until the time of sun-set, and afterwards. The precipitous sides of the mountain, and the neighbouring summits, may be seen with effect under any atmosphere which allows them to be seen at all; but *he* is the most fortunate adventurer, who chances to be involved in vapours which open and let in an extent of country partially, or, dispersing suddenly, reveal the whole region from centre to circumference.

A stranger to a mountainous country may not be aware that his walk in the early morning ought to be taken on the eastern side of the vale, otherwise he will lose the morning light, first touching the tops and thence creeping down the sides of the opposite hills, as the sun ascends, or he may go to some central eminence, commanding both the shadows from the eastern, and

[1] The only instances to which the foregoing observations do not apply, are Derwent-water and Lowes-water. Derwent is distinguished from all the other Lakes by being *surrounded* with sublimity: the fantastic mountains of Borrowdale to the south, the solitary majesty of Skiddaw to the north, the bold steeps of Wallow-crag and Lodore to the east, and to the west the clustering mountains of New-lands. Lowes-water is tame at the head, but towards its outlet has a magnificent assemblage of mountains. Yet as far as respects the formation of such receptacles, the general observation holds good: neither Derwent nor Lowes-water derive any supplies from the streams of those mountains that dignify the landscape towards the outlets.—W. W.

the lights upon the western mountains. But, if the horizon line in the east be low, the western side may be taken for the sake of the reflections, upon the water, of light from the rising sun. In the evening, for like reasons, the contrary course should be taken.

After all, it is upon the *mind* which a traveller brings along with him that his acquisitions, whether of pleasure or profit, must principally depend. -May I be allowed a few words on this subject?

Nothing is more injurious to genuine feeling than the practice of hastily and ungraciously depreciating the face of one country by comparing it with that of another. True it is Qui *bene* distinguit bene *docet;* yet fastidiousness is a wretched travelling companion: and the best guide to which, in matters of taste, we can entrust ourselves, is a disposition to be pleased. For example, if a traveller be among the Alps, let him surrender up his mind to the fury of the gigantic torrents, and take delight in the contemplation of their almost irresistible violence, without complaining of the monotony of their foaming course, or being disgusted with the muddiness of the water—apparent even where it is violently agitated. In Cumberland and Westmoreland, let not the comparative weakness of the streams prevent him from sympathising with such impetuosity as they possess; and making the most of the present objects, let him, as he justly may do, observe with admiration the unrivalled brilliancy of the water, and that variety of motion, mood, and character, that arises out of the want of those resources by which the power of the streams in the Alps is supported.—Again, with respect to the mountains; though these are comparatively of diminutive size, though there is little of perpetual snow, and no voice of summer-avalanches is heard among them: and though traces left by the ravage of the elements are here comparatively rare and unimpressive, yet out of this very deficiency proceeds a sense of stability and permanence that is, to many minds, more grateful—

> While the coarse rushes to the sweeping breeze
> Sigh forth their ancient melodies.[1]

Among the Alps are few places that do not preclude this feeling of tranquil sublimity. Havoc, and ruin, and desolation, and encroachment, are everywhere more or less obtruded; and it is difficult, notwithstanding the naked loftiness of the *pikes*, and the snow-capped summits of the *mounts*, to escape from the depressing sensation, that the whole are in a rapid process of dissolution; and, were it not that the destructive agency must abate as the heights diminish, would, in time to come, be levelled with the plains. Nevertheless, I would relish to the utmost the demonstrations of every species of power at work to effect such changes.

From these general views let us descend a moment to detail. A stranger to mountain imagery naturally on his first arrival looks out for sublimity in every object that admits of it; and is almost always disappointed. For this disappointment there exists, I believe, no general preventive; nor is it desirable that there should. But with regard to one class of objects, there is a point in which injurious expectations may be easily corrected. It is generally supposed that waterfalls are scarcely worth being looked at except after much rain, and that, the more swollen the stream the more fortunate the spectator; but this however is true only of large cataracts with sublime accompaniments; and not even of these without some drawbacks. In other instances, what becomes, at such a time, of that sense of refreshing coolness which can only be felt in dry and sunny weather, when the rocks, herbs, and flowers glisten with moisture diffused by the breath of the precipitous water? But, considering these things as objects of sight only, it may be observed, that the principal charm of the smaller waterfalls or cascades consists in certain proportions of form and affinities of colour, among the component parts of the

[1] See *The Pass of Kirkstone*, ll. 39-40, vol. vi. p. 159.—ED.

scene ; and in the contrast maintained between the falling water and that which is apparently at rest, or rather settling gradually into quiet in the pool below. The beauty of such a scene, where there is naturally so much agitation, is also heightened, in a peculiar manner, by the *glimmering*, and towards the verge of the pool, by the *steady*, reflection of the surrounding images. Now, all those delicate distinctions are destroyed by heavy floods, and the whole stream rushes along in foam and tumultuous confusion. A happy proportion of component parts is indeed noticeable among the landscapes of the North of England ; and, in this characteristic essential to a perfect picture, they surpass the scenes of Scotland, and, in a still greater degree, those of Switzerland.

As a resident among the Lakes, I frequently hear the scenery of this country compared with that of the Alps ; and therefore a few words shall be added to what has been incidentally said upon that subject.

If we could recall, to this region of lakes, the native pine-forests, with which many hundred years ago a large portion of the heights was covered, then, during spring and autumn, it might frequently, with much propriety, be compared to Switzerland,—the elements of the landscape would be the same—one country representing the other in miniature. Towns, villages, churches, rural seats, bridges and roads : green meadows and arable grounds, with their various produce, and deciduous woods of diversified foliage which occupy the vales and lower regions of the mountains, would, as in Switzerland, be divided by dark forests from ridges and round-topped heights covered with snow, and from pikes and sharp declivities imperfectly arrayed in the same glittering mantle : and the resemblance would be still more perfect on those days when vapours, resting upon, and floating around the summits, leave the elevation of the mountains less dependent upon the eye than on the imagination. But the pine-forests have wholly disappeared ; and only during late spring and early autumn is realised here

that assemblage of the imagery of different seasons, which is exhibited through the whole summer among the Alps,—winter in the distance,—and warmth, leafy woods, verdure and fertility at hand, and widely diffused.

Striking, then, from among the permanent materials of the landscape, that stage of vegetation which is occupied by pine-forests, and, above that, the perennial snows, we have mountains, the highest of which little exceed 3000 feet, while some of the Alps do not fall short of 14,000 or 15,000, and 8000 or 10,000 is not an uncommon elevation. Our tracts of wood and water are almost as diminutive in comparison; therefore, as far as sublimity is dependent upon absolute bulk and height, and atmospherical influences in connection with these, it is obvious, that there can be no rivalship. But a short residence among the British Mountains will furnish abundant proof, that, after a certain point of elevation, viz. that which allows of compact and fleecy clouds settling upon, or sweeping over, the summits, the sense of sublimity depends more upon form and relation of objects to each other than upon their actual magnitude; and that an elevation of 3000 feet is sufficient to call forth in a most impressive degree the creative, and magnifying, and softening powers of the atmosphere. Hence, on the score even of sublimity, the superiority of the Alps is by no means so great as might hastily be inferred;—and, as to the *beauty* of the lower regions of the Swiss Mountains, it is noticeable—that, as they are all regularly mown, their surface has nothing of that mellow tone and variety of hues by which mountain turf, that is never touched by the scythe, is distinguished. On the smooth and steep slopes of the Swiss hills, these plots of verdure do indeed agreeably unite their colour with that of the deciduous trees, or make a lively contrast with the dark green pine-groves that define them, and among which they run in endless variety of shapes —but this is most pleasing *at first sight;* the permanent gratification of the eye requires finer gradations of tone,

and a more delicate blending of hues into each other. Besides, it is only in spring and late autumn that cattle animate by their presence the Swiss lawns; and, though the pastures of the higher regions where they feed during the summer are left in their natural state of flowery herbage, those pastures are so remote, that their texture and colour are of no consequence in the composition of any picture in which a lake of the Vales is a feature. Yet in those lofty regions, how vegetation is invigorated by the genial climate of that country! Among the luxuriant flowers there met with, groves, or forests, if I may so call them, of Monks-hood are frequently seen; the plant of deep, rich blue, and as tall as in our gardens; and this at an elevation where, in Cumberland, Icelandic moss would only be found, or the stony summits be utterly bare.

We have, then, for the colouring of Switzerland, *principally* a vivid green herbage, black woods, and dazzling snows, presented in masses with a grandeur to which no one can be insensible; but not often graduated by Nature into soothing harmony, and so ill suited to the pencil, that though abundance of good subjects may be there found, they are not such as can be deemed *characteristic* of the country; nor is this unfitness confined to colour: the forms of the mountains, though many of them in some points of view the noblest that can be conceived, are apt to run into spikes and needles, and present a jagged outline which has a mean effect, transferred to canvas. This must have been felt by the ancient masters; for, if I am not mistaken, they have not left a single landscape, the materials of which are taken from the *peculiar* features of the Alps; yet Titian passed his life almost in their neighbourhood; the Poussins and Claude must have been well acquainted with their aspects; and several admirable painters, as Tibaldi and Luino, were born among the Italian Alps. A few experiments have lately been made by Englishmen, but they only prove that courage, skill, and judgment, may surmount any obstacles; and it may be safely

affirmed, that they who have done best in this bold adventure, will be the least likely to repeat the attempt. But, though our scenes are better suited to painting than those of the Alps, I should be sorry to contemplate either country in reference to that art, further than as its fitness or unfitness for the pencil renders it more or less pleasing to the eye of the spectator, who has learned to observe and feel, chiefly from Nature herself.

Deeming the points in which Alpine imagery is superior to British too obvious to be insisted upon, I will observe that the deciduous woods, though in many places unapproachable by the axe, and triumphing in the pomp and prodigality of Nature, have, in general,[1] neither the variety nor beauty which would exist in those of the mountains of Britain, if left to themselves. Magnificent walnut-trees grow upon the plains of Switzerland; and fine trees, of that species, are found scattered over the hill-sides; birches also grow here and there in luxuriant beauty; but neither these, nor oaks, are ever a prevailing tree, nor can even be said to be common; and the oaks, as far as I had an opportunity of observing, are greatly inferior to those of Britain. Among the interior vallies the proportion of beeches and pines is so great that other trees are scarcely noticeable; and surely such woods are at all seasons much less agreeable than that rich and harmonious distribution of oak, ash, elm, birch, and alder, that formerly clothed the sides of Snowdon and Helvellyn; and of which no mean remains still survive at the head of Ullswater. On the Italian side of the Alps, chestnut and walnut-trees grow at a considerable height on the mountains; but, even there, the foliage is not equal in beauty to the "natural product" of this climate. In fact the sunshine of the South of Europe, so envied when heard of at a distance, is in many respects injurious to rural beauty, particularly as it incites to the cultivation of spots of ground which in

[1] The greatest variety of trees is found in the Valais.—W. W.

colder climates would be left in the hands of Nature, favouring at the same time the culture of plants that are more valuable on account of the fruit they produce to gratify the palate, than for affording pleasure to the eye, as materials of landscape. Take, for instance, the Promontory of Bellagio, so fortunate in its command of the three branches of the Lake of Como, yet the ridge of the Promontory itself, being for the most part covered with vines interspersed with olive trees, accords but ill with the vastness of the green unappropriated mountains, and derogates not a little from the sublimity of those finely contrasted pictures to which it is a fore-ground. The vine, when cultivated upon a large scale, notwithstanding all that may be said of it in poetry,[1] makes but a dull formal appearance in landscape; and the olive-tree (though one is loth to say so) is not more grateful to the eye than our common willow, which it much resembles; but the hoariness of hue, common to both, has in the aquatic plant an appropriate delicacy, harmonising with the situation in which it most delights. The same may no doubt be said of the olive among the dry rocks of Attica, but I am speaking of it as found in gardens and vineyards in the North of Italy. At Bellagio, what Englishman can resist the temptation of substituting, in his fancy, for these formal treasures of cultivation, the natural variety of one of our parks—its pastured lawns, coverts of hawthorn, of wild-rose, and

[1] Lucretius * has charmingly described a scene of this kind.

Inque dies magis in montem succedere sylvas
Cogebant, infraque locum concedere cultis,
Prata, lacus, rivos, segetes, vinetaque laeta
Collibus et campis ut haberent, atque olearum
Caerula distinguens inter *plaga* currere posset
Per tumulos, et convallis, camposque profusa:
Ut nunc esse vides vario distincta lepore
Omnia, quae pomis intersita dulcibus ornant,
Arbustisque tenent felicibus obsita circum.—W. W.

* See *De Rerum Natura*, v. 1370-1378.—Ed.

honey-suckle, and the majesty of forest trees?—such wild graces as the banks of Derwent-water shewed in the time of the Ratcliffes; and Gowbarrow Park, Lowther, and Rydal do at this day.

As my object is to reconcile a Briton to the scenery of his own country, though not at the expense of truth, I am not afraid of asserting that in many points of view our LAKES, also, are much more interesting than those of the Alps; first, as is implied above, from being more happily proportioned to the other features of the landscape; and next, both as being infinitely more pellucid, and less subject to agitation from the winds.[1] Como, (which may perhaps be styled the King of Lakes, as Lugano is certainly the Queen) is disturbed by a periodical wind blowing *from* the head in the morning, and *towards* it in the afternoon. The magnificent Lake of the four Cantons, especially its noblest division, called the Lake of Uri, is not only much agitated by winds, but in the night time is disturbed from the bottom, as I was told, and indeed as I witnessed, without any apparent commotion in the air; and when at rest, the water is not pure to the eye, but of a heavy green hue—as is that of all the other lakes, apparently according to the degree in which they are fed by melted snows. If the Lake of Geneva furnish an exception, this is probably owing to its vast extent, which allows the water to deposit its

[1] It is remarkable that Como (as is probably the case with other Italian Lakes) is more troubled by storms in summer than in winter. Hence the propriety of the following verses:

> Lari! margine ubique confragoso
> Nulli coelicolum negas sacellum
> Picto pariete saxeoque tecto;
> Hinc miracula multa navitarum
> Audis, nec placido refellis ore,
> Sed nova usque paras, Noto vel Euro
> *Aestivas* quatientibus cavernas,
> Vel surgentis ab Adduae cubili
> Caeco grandinis imbre provoluto.—LANDOR.* W. W.

* In "Idyllia Heroica Decem," *Ad Larium*, 50, ll. 9-17.—ED.

impurities. The water of the English lakes, on the contrary, being of a crystalline clearness, the reflections of the surrounding hills are frequently so lively, that it is scarcely possible to distinguish the point where the real object terminates, and its unsubstantial duplicate begins. The lower part of the Lake of Geneva, from its narrowness, must be much less subject to agitation than the higher divisions, and, as the water is clearer than that of the other Swiss Lakes, it will frequently exhibit this appearance, though it is scarcely possible in an equal degree. During two comprehensive tours among the Alps, I did not observe, except on one of the smaller lakes, between Lugano and Ponte Tresa, a single instance of those beautiful repetitions of surrounding objects on the bosom of the water, which are so frequently seen here: not to speak of the fine dazzling trembling network, breezy motions, and streaks and circles of intermingled smooth and rippled water, which make the surface of our lakes a field of endless variety. But among the Alps, where every thing tends to the grand and the sublime, in surfaces as well as in forms, if the lakes do not court the placid reflections of land objects those of first-rate magnitude make compensation, in some degree, by exhibiting those ever-changing fields of green, blue, and purple shadows or lights, (one scarcely knows which to name them) that call to mind a sea-prospect contemplated from a lofty cliff.

The subject of torrents and water-falls has already been touched upon; but it may be added that in Switzerland, the perpetual accompaniment of snow upon the higher regions takes much from the effect of foaming white streams; while, from their frequency, they obstruct each other's influence upon the mind of the spectator; and, in all cases, the effect of an individual cataract, excepting the great Fall of the Rhine at Schaffhausen, is diminished by the general fury of the stream of which it is a part.

Recurring to the reflections from still water, I will

describe a singular phenomenon of this kind of which I was an eye-witness.

Walking by the side of Ullswater upon a calm September morning, I saw, deep within the bosom of the Lake, a magnificent Castle, with towers and battlements: nothing could be more distinct than the whole edifice. After gazing with delight upon it for some time, as upon a work of enchantment, I could not but regret that my previous knowledge of the place enabled me to account for the appearance. It was in fact the reflection of a pleasure-house called Lyulph's Tower—the towers and battlements magnified and so much changed in shape as not to be immediately recognized. In the meanwhile, the pleasure-house itself was altogether hidden from my view by a body of vapour stretching over it and along the hill-side on which it stands, but not so as to have intercepted its communication with the lake; and hence this novel and most impressive object, which, if I had been a stranger to the spot, would, from its being inexplicable, have long detained the mind in a state of pleasing astonishment.

Appearances of this kind, acting upon the credulity of early ages, may have given birth to, and favoured the belief in, stories of sub-aqueous palaces, gardens, and pleasure-grounds—the brilliant ornaments of Romance.

With this *inverted* scene I will couple a much more extraordinary phenomenon, which will show how other elegant fancies may have had their origin, less in invention than in the actual processes of Nature.

About eleven o'clock on the forenoon of a winter's day, coming suddenly, in company of a friend, into view of the Lake of Grasmere, we were alarmed by the sight of a newly-created Island; the transitory thought of the moment was, that it had been produced by an earthquake or some other convulsion of Nature. Recovering from the alarm, which was greater than the reader can possibly sympathize with, but which was shared to its full extent by my companion, we proceeded to examine

the object before us. The elevation of this new island exceeded considerably that of the old one, its neighbour; it was likewise larger in circumference, comprehending a space of about five acres; its surface rocky, speckled with snow, and sprinkled over with birch trees; it was divided towards the south from the other island by a narrow frith, and in like manner from the northern shore of the lake; on the east and west it was separated from the shore by a much larger space of smooth water.

Marvellous was the illusion! Comparing the new with the old Island, the surface of which is soft, green, and unvaried, I do not scruple to say that, as an object of sight, it was much the more distinct. "How little faith," we exclaimed, "is due to one sense, unless its evidence be confirmed by some of its fellows! What Stranger could possibly be persuaded that this, which we know to be an unsubstantial mockery, is *really* so; and that there exists only a single Island on this beautiful Lake?" At length the appearance underwent a gradual transmutation; it lost its prominence and passed into a glittering and dim *inversion*, and then totally disappeared; leaving behind it a clear open area of ice of the same dimensions. We now perceived that this bed of ice, which was thinly suffused with water, had produced the illusion, by reflecting and refracting (as persons skilled in optics would no doubt easily explain) a rocky and woody section of the opposite mountain named Silver-how.

Having dwelt so much upon the beauty of pure and still water, and pointed out the advantage which the Lakes of the North of England have in this particular over those of the Alps, it would be injustice not to advert to the sublimity that must often be given to Alpine scenes, by the agitations to which those vast bodies of diffused water are there subject. I have witnessed many tremendous thunder-storms among the Alps, and the most glorious effects of light and shadow; but I never happened to be present when any Lake was agitated by

those hurricanes which I imagine must often torment them. If the commotions be at all proportionable to the expanse and depth of the waters, and the height of the surrounding mountains, then, if I may judge from what is frequently seen here, the exhibition must be awful and astonishing.—On this day, March 30, 1822, the winds have been acting upon the small Lake of Rydal, as if they had received command to carry its waters from their bed into the sky; the white billows in different quarters disappeared under clouds, or rather drifts, of spray, that were whirled along, and up into the air by scouring winds, charging each other in squadrons in every direction, upon the Lake. The spray, having been hurried aloft till it lost its consistency and whiteness, was driven along the mountain tops like flying showers that vanish in the distance. Frequently an eddying wind scooped the waters out of the basin, and forced them upwards in the very shape of an Icelandic Geyser, or boiling fountain, to the height of several hundred feet.

This small Mere of Rydal, from its position, is subject in a peculiar degree to these commotions. The present season, however, is unusually stormy;—great numbers of fish, two of them not less than twelve pounds weight, were a few days ago cast on the shores of Derwent-water by the force of the waves.

Lest, in the foregoing comparative estimate, I should be suspected of partiality to my native mountains, I will support my general opinion by the authority of Mr. West, whose Guide to the Lakes has been eminently serviceable to the Tourist for nearly fifty years. The Author, a Roman Catholic Clergyman, had passed much time abroad, and was well acquainted with the scenery of the Continent. He thus expresses himself: "They who intend to make the continental tour should begin here; as it will give, in miniature, an idea of what they are to meet with there, in traversing the Alps and Apennines; to which our northern mountains are not inferior in

beauty of line, or variety of summit, number of lakes, and transparency of water; not in colouring of rock, or softness of turf, but in height and extent only. The mountains here are all accessible to the summit, and furnish prospects no less surprising, and with more variety, than the Alps themselves. The tops of the highest Alps are inaccessible, being covered with everlasting snow, which commencing at regular heights, above the cultivated tracts, or wooded and verdant sides, form indeed the highest contrast in Nature. For there may be seen all the variety of climate in one view. To this, however, we oppose the sight of the ocean, from the summits of all the higher mountains, as it appears intersected with promontories, decorated with islands, and animated with navigation."—West's *Guide*, p. 5.

EXCURSIONS TO THE TOP OF SCAWFELL AND ON THE BANKS OF ULLSWATER

It was my intention, several years ago, to describe a regular tour through this country, taking the different scenes in the most favourable order; but after some progress had been made in the work it was abandoned from a conviction, that if well executed it would lessen the pleasure of the Traveller by anticipation, and, if the contrary, it would mislead him. The Reader may not, however, be displeased with the following extract from a letter to a Friend, giving an account of a visit to a summit of one of the highest of these mountains; of which I am reminded by the observations of Mr. West, and by reviewing what has been said of this district in comparison with the Alps.

Having left Rosthwaite in Borrowdale, on a bright morning in the first week of October, we ascended from Seathwaite to the top of the ridge, called Ash-course, and thence beheld three distinct views;—on one side,

the continuous Vale of Borrowdale, Keswick, and Bassenthwaite,—with Skiddaw, Helvellyn, Saddle-back, and numerous other mountains—and, in the distance, the Solway Frith and the Mountains of Scotland ;—on the other side, and below us, the Langdale Pikes—their own vale below *them ;*—Windermere,—and, far beyond Windermere, Ingleborough in Yorkshire. But how shall I speak of the deliciousness of the third prospect! At this time, *that* was most favoured by sunshine and shade. The green Vale of Esk—deep and green with its glittering serpent stream, lay below us : and, on we looked to the Mountains near the Sea,—Black-Comb pre-eminent, —and, still beyond, to the Sea itself, in dazzling brightness. Turning round we saw the Mountains of Wastdale in tumult ; to our right, Great Gavel, the loftiest, a distinct and *huge* form, though the middle of the mountain was, to our eyes, as its base.

We had attained the object of this journey ; but our ambition now mounted higher. We saw the summit of Scawfell apparently very near to us ; and we shaped our course towards it ; but discovering that it could not be reached without first making a considerable descent, we resolved, instead, to aim at another point of the same mountain, called the *Pikes*, which I have since found has been estimated as higher than the summit bearing the name of Scawfell Head where the Stone Man is built.

The sun had never once been overshadowed by a cloud during the whole of our progress from the centre of Borrowdale. On the summit of the Pike, which we gained after much toil, though without difficulty, there was not a breath of air to stir even the papers containing our refreshment, as they lay spread out upon a rock. The stillness seemed to be not of this world :—we paused, and kept silence to listen ; and no sound could be heard : the Scawfell Cataracts were voiceless to us ; and there was not an insect to hum in the air. The vales which we had seen from Ash-course lay yet in

view; and, side by side with Eskdale, we now saw the sister Vale of Donnerdale terminated by the Duddon Sands. But the majesty of the mountains below, and close to us, is not to be conceived. We now beheld the whole mass of Great Gavel from its base,—the Den of Wastdale at our feet—a gulf immeasurable: Grasmire and the other mountains of Crummock—Ennerdale and its mountains; and the Sea beyond! We sat down to our repast, and gladly would we have tempered our beverage (for there was no spring or well near us) with such a supply of delicious water as we might have procured, had we been on the rival summit of Great Gavel; for on its highest point is a small triangular receptacle in the native rock, which, the shepherds say, is never dry. There we might have slaked our thirst plenteously with a pure and celestial liquid, for the cup or basin, it appears, has no other feeder than the dews of heaven, the showers, the vapours, the hoar frost, and the spotless snow.

While we were gazing around, "Look," I exclaimed, "at yon ship upon the glittering sea!" "Is it a ship?" replied our shepherd-guide. "It can be nothing else," interposed my companion; "I cannot be mistaken, I am so accustomed to the appearance of ships at sea." The Guide dropped the argument; but, before a minute was gone, he quietly said, "Now look at your ship; it is changed into a horse." So indeed it was,—a horse with a gallant neck and head. We laughed heartily; and, I hope, when again inclined to be positive, I may remember the ship and the horse upon the glittering sea; and the calm confidence, yet submissiveness of our wise Man of the Mountains, who certainly had more knowledge of clouds than we, whatever might be our knowledge of ships.

I know not how long we might have remained on the summit of the Pike, without a thought of moving, had not our Guide warned us that we must not linger; for a storm was coming. We looked in vain to espy the

signs of it. Mountains, vales, and sea were touched with the clear light of the sun. "It is there," said he, pointing to the sea beyond Whitehaven, and there we perceived a light vapour unnoticeable but by a shepherd accustomed to watch all mountain bodings. We gazed around again, and yet again, unwilling to lose the remembrance of what lay before us in that lofty solitude; and then prepared to depart. Meanwhile the air changed to cold, and we saw that tiny vapour swelled into mighty masses of cloud which came boiling over the mountains. Great Gavel, Helvellyn, and Skiddaw, were wrapt in storm; yet Langdale and the mountains in that quarter, remained all bright in sunshine. Soon the storm reached us; we sheltered under a crag; and almost as rapidly as it had come it passed away, and left us free to observe the struggles of gloom and sunshine in other quarters. Langdale now had its share, and the Pikes of Langdale were decorated by two splendid rainbows. Skiddaw also had his own rainbows. Before we again reached Ash-course every cloud had vanished from every summit.

I ought to have mentioned that round the top of Scawfell-PIKE not a blade of grass is to be seen. Cushions or tufts of moss, parched and brown, appear between the huge blocks and stones that lie in heaps on all sides to a great distance, like skeletons or bones of the earth not needed at the creation, and there left to be covered with never-dying lichens, which the clouds and dews nourish; and adorn with colours of vivid and exquisite beauty. Flowers, the most brilliant feathers, and even gems, scarcely surpass in colouring some of those masses of stone, which no human eye beholds, except the shepherd or traveller be led thither by curiosity: and how seldom must this happen! For the other eminence is the one visited by the adventurous stranger; and the shepherd has no inducement to ascend the PIKE in quest of his sheep; no food being *there* to tempt them.

We certainly were singularly favoured in the weather, for when we were seated on the summit, our conductor, turning his eyes thoughtfully round, said, "I do not know that in my whole life, I was ever, at any season of the year, so high upon the mountains on so *calm* a day." (It was the 7th of October.) Afterwards we had a spectacle of the grandeur of earth and heaven commingled; yet without terror. We knew that the storm would pass away;—for so our prophetic Guide had assured us.

Before we reached Seathwaite in Borrowdale, a few stars had appeared, and we pursued our way down the Vale, to Rosthwaite, by moonlight.

Scawfell and Helvellyn being the two Mountains of this region which will best repay the fatigue of ascending them, the following Verses may be here introduced with propriety. They are from the Author's Miscellaneous Poems.

To ———

ON HER FIRST ASCENT TO THE SUMMIT OF HELVELLYN

INMATE of a Mountain Dwelling,
Thou hast clomb aloft, and gazed,
From the watch-towers of Helvellyn;
Awed, delighted, and amazed!

Potent was the spell that bound thee
Not unwilling to obey;
For blue Ether's arms, flung round thee,
Stilled the pantings of dismay.

Lo! the dwindled woods and meadows!
What a vast abyss is there!
Lo! the clouds, the solemn shadows,
And the glistenings—heavenly fair!

And a record of commotion
Which a thousand ridges yield;

Ridge, and gulf, and distant ocean
Gleaming like a silver shield !

—Take thy flight ;—possess, inherit
Alps or Andes—they are thine !
With the morning's roseate Spirit,
Sweep their length of snowy line ;

Or survey the bright dominions
In the gorgeous colours drest
Flung from off the purple pinions,
Evening spreads throughout the west !

Thine are all the coral fountains
Warbling in each sparry vault
Of the untrodden lunar mountains ;
Listen to their songs !—or halt,

To Niphates' top invited,
Whither spiteful Satan steered ;
Or descend where the ark alighted,
When the green earth re-appeared :

For the power of hills is on thee,
As was witnessed through thine eye
Then, when old Helvellyn won thee
To confess their majesty ![1]

Having said so much of *points of view* to which few are likely to ascend, I am induced to subjoin an account of a short excursion through more accessible parts of the country, made at a *time* when it is seldom seen but by the inhabitants. As the journal was written for one acquainted with the general features of the country,[2] only those effects and appearances are dwelt upon, which are produced by the changeableness of the atmosphere, or belong to the season when the excursion was made.

A.D. 1805.—On the 7th of November, on a damp and gloomy morning, we left Grasmere Vale, intending to pass a few days on the banks of Ullswater. A mild and dry autumn had been unusually favourable to the

[1] See the "Poetical Works," vol. vi. pp. 135-7.—ED.
[2] It was written by his sister Dorothy.—ED.

preservation and beauty of foliage; and, far advanced as the season was, the trees on the larger Island of Rydal-mere retained a splendour which did not need the heightening of sunshine. We noticed, as we passed, that the line of the grey rocky shore of that island, shaggy with variegated bushes and shrubs, and spotted and striped with purplish brown heath, indistinguishably blending with its image reflected in the still water, produced a curious resemblance, both in form and colour, to a richly-coated caterpillar, as it might appear through a magnifying glass of extraordinary power. The mists gathered as we went along: but, when we reached the top of Kirkstone, we were glad we had not been discouraged by the apprehension of bad weather. Though not able to see a hundred yards before us, we were more than contented. At such a time, and in such a place, every scattered stone the size of one's head becomes a companion. Near the top of the Pass is the remnant of an old wall, which (magnified, though obscured, by the vapour) might have been taken for a fragment of some monument of ancient grandeur,—yet that same pile of stones we had never before even observed. This situation, it must be allowed, is not favourable to gaiety; but a pleasing hurry of spirits accompanies the surprise occasioned by objects transformed, dilated, or distorted, as they are when seen through such a medium. Many of the fragments of rock on the top and slopes of Kirkstone, and of similar places, are fantastic enough in themselves; but the full effect of such impressions can only be had in a state of weather when they are not likely to be *sought* for. It was not till we had descended considerably that the fields of Hartshope were seen, like a lake tinged by the reflection of sunny clouds: I mistook them for Brothers-water, but, soon after, we saw that Lake gleaming faintly with a steely brightness,—then, as we continued to descend, appeared the brown oaks, and the birches of lively yellow—and the cottages —and the lowly Hall of Hartshope, with its long roof

and ancient chimneys. During great part of our way to Patterdale, we had rain, or rather drizzling vapour; for there was never a drop upon our hair or clothes larger than the smallest pearls upon a lady's ring.

The following morning, incessant rain till 11 o'clock, when the sky began to clear, and we walked along the eastern shore of Ullswater towards the farm of Blowick. The wind blew strong, and drove the clouds forward, on the side of the mountain above our heads;—two storm-stiffened black yew-trees fixed our notice, seen through, or under the edge of, the flying mists,—four or five goats were bounding among the rocks;—the sheep moved about more quietly, or cowered beneath their sheltering places. This is the only part of the country where goats are now found;[1] but this morning, before we had seen these, I was reminded of that picturesque animal by two rams of mountain breed, both with Ammonian horns, and with beards majestic as that which Michael Angelo has given to his statue of Moses.—But to return; when our path had brought us to that part of the naked common which overlooks the woods and bush-besprinkled fields of Blowick, the lake, clouds, and mists were all in motion to the sound of sweeping winds:—the church and cottages of Patterdale scarcely visible, or seen only by fits between the shifting vapours. To the northward the scene was less visionary;—Place Fell steady and bold;—the whole lake driving onward like a great river —waves dancing round the small islands. The house at Blowick was the boundary of our walk; and we returned, lamenting to see a decaying and uncomfortable dwelling in a place where sublimity and beauty seemed to contend with each other. But these regrets were dispelled by a glance on the woods that clothe the opposite steeps of the lake. How exquisite was the mixture of sober and splendid hues! The general

[1] This was written in 1835. There are no wild goats now in the English Lake District.—ED.

colouring of the trees was brown—rather that of ripe hazel nuts; but towards the water, there were yet beds of green, and in the highest parts of the wood, was abundance of yellow foliage, which, gleaming through a vapoury lustre, reminded us of masses of clouds, as you see them gathered together in the west, and touched with the golden light of the setting sun.

After dinner we walked up the Vale; I had never had an idea of its extent and width in passing along the public road on the other side. We followed the path that leads from house to house; two or three times it took us through some of those copses or groves that cover the little hillocks in the middle of the vale, making an intricate and pleasing intermixture of lawn and wood. Our fancies could not resist the temptation; and we fixed upon a spot for a cottage, which we began to build: and finished as easily as castles are raised in the air.—Visited the same spot in the evening. I shall say nothing of the moonlight aspect of the situation which had charmed us so much in the afternoon; but I wish you had been with us when, in returning to our friend's house, we espied his lady's large white dog, lying in the moonshine upon the round knoll under the old yew-tree in the garden, a romantic image—the dark tree and its dark shadow—and the elegant creature, as fair as a spirit! The torrents murmured softly: the mountains down which they were falling did not, to my sight, furnish a back-ground for this Ossianic picture; but I had a consciousness of the depth of the seclusion, and that mountains were embracing us on all sides; "I saw not, but I *felt* that they were there."

Friday, November 9th.—Rain, as yesterday, till 10 o'clock, when we took a boat to row down the lake. The day improved,—clouds and sunny gleams on the mountains. In the large bay under Place Fell, three fishermen were dragging a net,—a picturesque group beneath the high and bare crags! A raven was seen aloft; not hovering like the kite, for that is not the habit

of the bird ; but passing on with a straight-forward perseverance, and timing the motion of its wings to its own croaking. The waters were agitated ; and the iron tone of the raven's voice, which strikes upon the ear at all times as the more dolorous from its regularity, was in fine keeping with the wild scene before our eyes. This carnivorous fowl is a great enemy to the lambs of these solitudes ; I recollect frequently seeing, when a boy, bunches of unfledged ravens suspended from the churchyard gates of H——, for which a reward of *so* much a head was given to the adventurous destroyer.—The fishermen drew their net ashore, and hundreds of fish were leaping in their prison. They were all of the kind called skellies, a sort of fresh-water herring, shoals of which may sometimes be seen dimpling or rippling the surface of the lake in calm weather. This species is not found, I believe, in any other of these lakes ; nor, as far as I know, is the chevin, that *spiritless* fish, (though I am loth to call it so, for it was a prime favourite with Isaac Walton,) which must frequent Ullswater, as I have seen a large shoal passing into the lake from the river Eamont. *Here* are no pike, and the char are smaller than those of the other lakes, and of inferior quality ; but the grey trout attains a very large size, sometimes weighing above twenty pounds. This lordly creature seems to know that "retiredness is a piece of majesty" ; for it is scarcely ever caught, or even seen, except when it quits the depths of the lake in the spawning season, and runs up into the streams, where it is too often destroyed in disregard of the law of the land and of Nature.

Quitted the boat in the bay of Sandwyke, and pursued our way towards Martindale along a pleasant path—at first through a coppice, bordering the lake, then through green fields—and came to the village, (if village it may be called, for the houses are few, and separated from each other,) a sequestered spot, shut out from the view of the lake. Crossed the one-arched bridge, below the

chapel, with its "bare ring of mossy wall," and single yew-tree. At the last house in the dale we were greeted by the master, who was sitting at his door, with a flock of sheep collected round him, for the purpose of smearing them with tar (according to the custom of the season) for protection against the winter's cold. He invited us to enter, and view a room built by Mr. Hasell for the accommodation of his friends at the annual chase of red deer in his forests at the head of these dales. The room is fitted up in the sportsman's style, with a cupboard for bottles and glasses, with strong chairs, and a dining-table; and ornamented with the horns of the stags caught at these hunts for a succession of years—the length of the last race each had run being recorded under his spreading antlers. The good woman treated us with oaten cake, new and crisp; and after this welcome refreshment and rest, we proceeded on our return to Patterdale by a short cut over the mountains. On leaving the fields of Sandwyke, while ascending by a gentle slope along the valley of Martindale, we had occasion to observe that in thinly-peopled glens of this character the general want of wood gives a peculiar interest to the scattered cottages embowered in sycamore. Towards its head, this valley splits into two parts; and in one of these (that to the left) there is no house, nor any building to be seen but a cattle-shed on the side of a hill, which is sprinkled over with trees, evidently the remains of an extensive forest. Near the entrance of the other division stands the house where we were entertained, and beyond the enclosures of that farm there are no other. A few old trees remain, relics of the forest, a little stream hastens, though with serpentine windings, through the uncultivated hollow, where many cattle were pasturing. The cattle of this country are generally white, or light-coloured; but these were dark brown, or black, which heightened the resemblance this scene bears to many parts of the Highlands of Scotland.—While we paused to rest upon the hill-side, though well contented

with the quiet every-day sounds—the lowing of cattle, bleating of sheep, and the very gentle murmuring of the valley stream, we could not but think what a grand effect the music of the bugle-horn would have among these mountains. It is still heard once every year, at the chase I have spoken of; a day of festivity for the inhabitants of this district except the poor deer, the most ancient of them all. Our ascent even to the top was very easy; when it was accomplished we had exceedingly fine views, some of the lofty Fells being resplendent with sunshine, and others partly shrouded by clouds. Ullswater, bordered by black steeps, was of dazzling brightness; the plain beyond Penrith smooth and bright, or rather gleamy, as the sea or sea sands. Looked down into Boardale, which, like Stybarrow, has been named from the wild swine that formerly abounded here; but it has now no sylvan covert, being smooth and bare, a long, narrow, deep, cradle-shaped glen, lying so sheltered that one would be pleased to see it planted by human hands, there being a sufficiency of soil; and the trees would be sheltered almost like shrubs in a green-house.—After having walked some way along the top of the hill, came in view of Glenriddin and the mountains at the head of Grisdale.—Before we began to descend turned aside to a small ruin, called at this day the chapel, where it is said the inhabitants of Martindale and Patterdale were accustomed to assemble for worship. There are now no traces from which you could infer for what use the building had been erected; the loose stones and the few which yet continue piled up resemble those which lie elsewhere on the mountain; but the shape of the building having been oblong, its remains differ from those of a common sheep-fold; and it has stood east and west. Scarcely did the Druids, when they fled to these fastnesses, perform their rites in any situation more exposed to disturbance from the elements. One cannot pass by without being reminded that the rustic psalmody must have had the accompaniment of many a wildly-whistling

blast; and what dismal storms must have often drowned the voice of the preacher! As we descend, Patterdale opens upon the eye in grand simplicity, screened by mountains, and proceeding from two heads, Deepdale and Hartshope, where lies the little lake of Brotherswater, named in old maps Broaderwater, and probably rightly so; for Bassenthwaite-mere at this day is familiarly called Broadwater; but the change in the appellation of this small lake or pool (if it be a corruption) may have been assisted by some melancholy accident similar to what happened about twenty years ago, when two brothers were drowned there, having gone out to take their holiday pleasure upon the ice on a new-year's day.

A rough and precipitous peat track brought us down to our friend's house.—Another fine moonlight night; but a thick fog rising from the neighbouring river, enveloped the rocky and wood-crested knoll on which our fancy cottage had been erected; and, under the damp cast upon my feelings, I consoled myself with moralising on the folly of hasty decisions in matters of importance, and the necessity of having at least one year's knowledge of a place before you realise airy suggestions in solid stone.

Saturday, November 10th.—At the breakfast-table tidings reached us of the death of Lord Nelson, and of the victory at Trafalgar. Sequestered as we were from the sympathy of a crowd, we were shocked to hear that the bells had been ringing joyously at Penrith to celebrate the triumph. In the rebellion of the year 1745 people fled with their valuables from the open country to Patterdale, as a place of refuge secure from the incursions of strangers. At that time, news such as we had heard might have been long in penetrating so far into the recesses of the mountains; but now, as you know, the approach is easy, and the communication in summer time, almost hourly: nor is this strange, for travellers after pleasure are become not less active, and more numerous than those who formerly left their homes for

purposes of gain. The priest on the banks of the remotest stream of Lapland will talk familiarly of Buonaparte's last conquests, and discuss the progress of the French revolution, having acquired much of his information from adventurers impelled by curiosity alone.

The morning was clear and cheerful after a night of sharp frost. At 10 o'clock we took our way on foot towards Pooley Bridge, on the same side of the lake we had coasted in a boat the day before.—Looked backwards to the south from our favourite station above Blowick. The dazzling sunbeams striking upon the church and village, while the earth was steaming with exhalations not traceable in other quarters, rendered their forms even more indistinct than the partial and flitting veil of unillumined vapour had done two days before. The grass on which we trod, and the trees in every thicket, were dripping with melted hoar-frost. We observed the lemon-coloured leaves of the birches, as the breeze turned them to the sun, sparkle, or rather *flash*, like diamonds, and the leafless purple twigs were tipped with globes of shining crystal.

The day continued delightful, and unclouded to the end. I will not describe the country which we slowly travelled through, nor relate our adventures; and will only add, that on the afternoon of the 13th we returned along the banks of Ullswater by the usual road. The lake lay in deep repose after the agitations of a wet and stormy morning. The trees in Gowbarrow park were in that state when what is gained by the disclosure of their bark and branches compensates, almost, for the loss of foliage, exhibiting the variety which characterises the point of time between autumn and winter. The hawthorns were leafless; their round heads covered with rich green berries, and adorned with arches of green brambles, and eglantines hung with glossy hips; and the grey trunks of some of the ancient oaks, which in the summer season might have been regarded only for their venerable majesty, now attracted notice by a

pretty embellishment of green mosses and fern intermixed with russet leaves retained by those slender outstarting twigs which the veteran tree would not have tolerated in his strength. The smooth silver branches of the ashes were bare; most of the alders as green as the Devonshire cottage-myrtle that weathers the snows of Christmas. —Will you accept it as some apology for my having dwelt so long on the woodland ornaments of these scenes — that artists speak of the trees on the banks of Ullswater, and especially along the bays of Stybarrow crags, as having a peculiar character of picturesque intricacy in their stems and branches, which their rocky stations and the mountain winds have combined to give them?

At the end of Gowbarrow park a large herd of deer were either moving slowly or standing still among the fern. I was sorry when a chance-companion, who had joined us by the way, startled them with a whistle, disturbing an image of grave simplicity and thoughtful enjoyment; for I could have fancied that those natives of this wild and beautiful region were partaking with us a sensation of the solemnity of the closing day. The sun had been set some time; and we could perceive that the light was fading away from the coves of Helvellyn, but the lake under a luminous sky, was more brilliant than before.

After tea at Patterdale, set out again:—a fine evening; the seven stars close to the mountain-top; all the stars seemed brighter than usual. The steeps were reflected in Brotherswater, and, above the lake, appeared like enormous black perpendicular walls. The Kirkstone torrents had been swoln by the rains, and now filled the mountain pass with their roaring, which added greatly to the solemnity of our walk. Behind us, when we had climbed to a great height, we saw one light, very distinct, in the vale, like a large red star—a solitary one in the gloomy region. The cheerfulness of the scene was in the sky above us.

Reached home a little before midnight.[1]

In the edition of 1835, Wordsworth added the following ITINERARY OF THE LAKES, which it seems desirable to reproduce in full. It will have a quasi-archæological interest to posterity, and would have been doubly interesting if the Map of the District of the Lakes, which is given in that edition of 1835, could have been reissued now. If all similar things were reproduced, however, the publication of this edition would have to be postponed for many a year to come! At page 135 of the edition of 1835, we find the following:—

The Publishers, with permission of the Author, have added the following

ITINERARY OF THE LAKES,

FOR THE USE OF TOURISTS

STAGES

	MILES
Lancaster to Kendal, by Kirkby Lonsdale	30
Lancaster to Kendal, by Burton	22
Lancaster to Kendal, by Milnthorpe	21
Lancaster to Ulverston, over Sands	21
Lancaster to Ulverston, by Levens Bridge	$35\frac{1}{2}$
Ulverston to Hawkshead, by Coniston Water Head	19
Ulverston to Bowness, by Newby Bridge	17
Hawkshead to Ambleside	5
Hawkshead to Bowness	6
Kendal to Ambleside	14
Kendal to Ambleside, by Bowness	15
From and back to Ambleside round the two Langdales	18
Ambleside to Ullswater	10
Ambleside to Keswick	$16\frac{1}{4}$
Keswick to Borrowdale, and round the Lake	12
Keswick to Borrowdale and Buttermere	23

[1] In the edition of 1835 Wordsworth added, "The following verses (from the Author's Miscellaneous Poems) after what has just been read may be acceptable to the reader, by way of conclusion to this little Volume." He then inserts *Ode, The Pass of Kirkstone;* for which see the "Poetical Works," vol. vi. p. 158.—ED.

	MILES
Keswick to Wastdale and Calder Bridge	27
Calder Bridge to Buttermere and Keswick	29
Keswick, round Bassenthwaite Lake	18
Keswick to Patterdale, Pooley Bridge, and Penrith	38
Keswick to Pooley Bridge and Penrith	24
Keswick to Penrith	17½
Whitehaven to Keswick	27
Workington to Keswick	21
Excursion from Penrith to Hawes Water	27
Carlisle to Penrith	18
Penrith to Kendal	26

*Inns and Public Houses, when not mentioned, are marked thus *.*

LANCASTER to KENDAL, by Kirkby Lonsdale, 30 m.

MILES		MILES	MILES		MILES
5	Caton	5	2	Tunstall	13
2	Claughton	7	2	Burrow	15
2	Hornby *	9	2	Kirkby Lonsdale	17
2	Melling	11	13	Kendal	30

INNS.—*Lancaster*, King's Arms, Commercial Inn, Royal Oak.
INNS.—*Kirkby Lonsdale*, Rose and Crown, Green Dragon.

LANCASTER to KENDAL, by Burton, 21¾ m.

10¾	Burton	10¾	½	End Moor *	16
4¾	Crooklands *	15½	5¾	Kendal	21¾

INNS.—*Kendal*, King's Arms, Commercial Inn.—*Burton*, Royal Oak, King's Arms.

LANCASTER to KENDAL, by Milnthorpe, 21¼ m.

2¾	Slyne *	2¾	4	Hale *	12
1¼	Bolton-le-Sands *	4	⅕	Beethom *	12⅕
2	Carnforth *	6	1¼	Milnthorpe	13¾
2	Junction of the Milnthorpe and Burton roads	8	1¼	Heversham *	15
			1½	Levens-bridge	16½
			4¾	Kendal	21¼

INN.—*Milnthorpe*, Cross Keys.

LANCASTER to ULVERSTON, over Sands, 21 m.

MILES		MILES	MILES		MILES
3½	Hest Bank * .	3½	1¼	Flookburgh * .	15
¼	Lancaster Sands .	3¾	¾	Cark . .	15¾
9	Kent's Bank .	12¾	¼	Leven Sands .	16
1	Lower Allithwaite .	13¾	5	Ulverston . .	21

INNS.—*Ulverston*, Sun Inn, Bradyll's Arms.

LANCASTER to ULVERSTON, by Levens Bridge, 35½ m.

12	Hale * . . .	12	3	Lindal * . .	23½
½	Beethom * . .	12½	2	Newton * . .	25½
1¼	Milnthorpe . .	13¾	2	Newby-bridge * .	27½
1¼	Heversham * .	15	2	Low Wood . .	29½
1½	Levens-bridge .	16½	3	Greenodd . .	32½
4	Witherslack * .	20½	3	Ulverston . .	35½

ULVERSTON to HAWKSHEAD, by Coniston Water-Head, 19 m.

6	Lowick-bridge .	6	8	Coniston Water-Head *	16
2	Nibthwaite . .	8	3	Hawkshead . .	19

INN.—*Hawkshead*, Red Lion.

ULVERSTON to BOWNESS, by Newby Bridge, 16 m.

3	Green Odd . .	3	2	Newby-bridge .	8
3	Low Wood . .	6	8	Bowness . .	16

INNS.—*Bowness*, White Lion, Crown Inn.

HAWKSHEAD to AMBLESIDE, 5 m.

HAWKSHEAD to BOWNESS, 5½ m.

2	Sawrey . .	2	1½	Bowness . .	5½
2	Windermere-ferry *	4			

KENDAL to AMBLESIDE, 13½ m.

5	Staveley * . .	5	1½	Troutbeck-bridge *	10
1½	Ings Chapel . .	6½	2	Low Wood Inn .	12
2	Orrest-head . .	8½	1½	Ambleside . .	13½

INNS.—*Ambleside*, Salutation Hotel, Commercial Inn.

KENDAL to AMBLESIDE, by Bowness, 15 m.

MILES		MILES	MILES		MILES
4	Crook * . .	4	2½	Troutbeck-bridge .	11½
2	Gilpin Bridge * .	6	2	Low Wood Inn .	13½
3	Bowness . .	9	1½	Ambleside . .	15

A CIRCUIT from and back to AMBLESIDE by LITTLE and GREAT LANGDALE, 18 m.

3	Skelwith-bridge * .	3	2	Langdale Chapel Stile * . .	13
2	Colwith Cascade .	5	5	By High Close and Rydal to Ambleside	18
3	Blea Tarn . .	8			
3	Dungeon Ghyll .	11			

AMBLESIDE to ULLSWATER, 10 m.

4	Top of Kirkstone .	4	3	Inn at Patterdale .	10
3	Kirkstone Foot .	7			

AMBLESIDE to KESWICK, 16¼ m.

1½	Rydal . . .	1½	4	Smalthwaite-bridge	12¼
3½	Swan, Grasmere * .	5	3	Castlerigg . .	15¼
2	Dunmail Raise .	7	1	Keswick . .	16¼
1¼	Nag's Head, Wythburn	8¼			

EXCURSIONS FROM KESWICK

INNS.—*Keswick*, Royal Oak, Queen's Head.

TO BORROWDALE, and ROUND THE LAKE, 12 m.

2	Barrow-house .	2	1	Return to Grange .	6
1	Lowdore . .	3	4½	Portinscale . .	10½
1	Grange . .	4	1½	Keswick . .	12
1	Bowder Stone .	5			

TO BORROWDALE and BUTTERMERE

5	Bowder Stone .	5	4	Gatesgarth . .	12
1	Rosthwaite . .	6	2	Buttermere * . .	14
2	Seatoller . .	8	9	Keswick, by Newlands	23

Two Days' Excursion to Wastdale, Ennerdale, and Lowes-Water

First Day

MILES		MILES	MILES		MILES
6	Rosthwaite . .	6	6	Strands,* Nether Wastdale . .	20
2	Seatoller . .	8	4	Gosforth * . .	24
1	Seathwaite . .	9	3	Calder Bridge * .	27
3	Sty-head . .	12			
2	Wastdale-head .	14			

Second Day

7	Ennerdale Bridge .	7	2	Scale-hill * . .	16
3	Lamplugh Cross * .	10	4	Buttermere * .	20
4	Lowes-Water .	14	9	Keswick . .	29

Keswick round Bassenthwaite Water

8	Peel Wyke * .	8	3	Bassenthwaite Sand-bed . . .	13
1	Ouse Bridge . .	9	5	Keswick . .	18
1	Castle Inn . .	10			

Keswick to Patterdale, and by Pooley Bridge to Penrith

10	Springfield * . .	10	10	Pooley Bridge * through Gowbarrow Park	32
7	Gowbarrow Park .	17	6	Penrith . .	38
5	Patterdale * . .	22			

Inns.—*Penrith*, Crown Inn, The George.

Keswick to Pooley Bridge and Penrith

12	Penruddock * .	12	3	Pooley Bridge .	18
3	Dacre * . .	15	6	Penrith . .	24

Keswick to Penrith, 17½ m.

4	Threlkeld * . .	4	3½	Stainton * . .	15
7½	Penruddock . .	11½	2½	Penrith . .	17½

Whitehaven to Keswick, 27 m.

MILES		MILES	MILES		MILES
2	Moresby . .	2	5	Cockermouth .	14
2	Distington . .	4	$2\frac{1}{2}$	Embleton . .	$16\frac{1}{2}$
2	Winscales . .	6	$6\frac{1}{2}$	Thornthwaite .	23
3	Little Clifton .	9	4	Keswick . .	27

Inns.—*Whitehaven*, Black Lion, Golden Lion, The Globe.
Inns.—*Cockermouth*, The Globe, The Sun.

Workington to Keswick, 21 m.

The road joins that from Whitehaven to Keswick 4 miles from Workington.

Inns.—*Workington*, Green Dragon, New Crown, King's Arms.

Excursion from Penrith to Haweswater

5	Lowther, or Askham *	5	5	Over Moor Dovack to Pooley . .	21
7	By Bampton * to Hawes-water . .	12	6	By Dalemain to Penrith . .	27
4	Return by Butters-wick . .	16			

Carlisle to Penrith, 18 m.

$2\frac{1}{2}$	Carlton * . .	$2\frac{1}{2}$	2	Plumpton * . .	13
7	Low Hesket * .	$9\frac{1}{2}$	5	Penrith . .	18
$1\frac{1}{2}$	High Hesket * .	11			

Inns.—*Carlisle*, The Bush, Coffee House, King's Arms.

Penrith to Kendal, 26 m.

1	Eamont Bridge * .	1	$6\frac{3}{4}$	Hawse Foot * .	17
$1\frac{1}{2}$	Clifton * . .	$2\frac{1}{2}$	4	Plough Inn * .	21
2	Hackthorpe * .	$4\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	Skelsmergh Stocks *	$23\frac{1}{2}$
$5\frac{3}{4}$	Shap . . .	$10\frac{1}{4}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	Kendal . .	26

Inns.—*Shap*, Greyhound, King's Arms.

X

UPON EPITAPHS (I)

UPON EPITAPHS[1]

It needs scarcely be said, that an Epitaph presupposes a Monument, upon which it is to be engraven. Almost all Nations have wished that certain external signs should point out the places where their dead are interred. Among savage tribes unacquainted with letters this has mostly been done either by rude stones placed near the graves, or by mounds of earth raised over them. This custom proceeded obviously from a twofold desire; first, to guard the remains of the deceased from irreverent approach or from savage violation: and, secondly, to preserve their memory. "Never any," says Camden, "neglected burial but some savage nations; as the Bactrians, which cast their dead to the dogs; some varlet philosophers, as Diogenes, who desired to be devoured of fishes; some dissolute courtiers, as Mæcenas, who was wont to say, 'Non tumulum curo; sepelit natura relictos.'

I'm careless of a grave:—Nature her dead will save.

As soon as nations had learned the use of letters, epitaphs were inscribed upon these monuments; in order that their intention might be more surely and adequately fulfilled. I have derived monuments and epitaphs from two sources of feeling: but these do in fact resolve

[1] First published in *The Friend*, February 22, 1810. In reference to this essay, Hartley Coleridge said to Dean Boyle, "It shews that if Wordsworth had not been a great poet, he might have been a great prose writer." See *Recollections*, by the Dean of Salisbury, p. 118.—Ed.

themselves into one. The invention of epitaphs, Weever, in his *Discourse of Funeral Monuments*,[1] says rightly, 'proceeded from the presage or fore-feeling of immortality, implanted in all men naturally, and is referred to the scholars of Linus the Theban poet, who flourished about the year of the world two thousand seven hundred; who first bewailed this Linus their Master, when he was slain, in doleful verses, then called of him Œlina, afterwards Epitaphia, for that they were first sung at burials, after engraved upon the sepulchres.'"[2]

And, verily, without the consciousness of a principle of immortality in the human soul, Man could never have had awakened in him the desire to live in the remembrance of his fellows: mere love, or the yearning of kind towards kind, could not have produced it.[3] The dog or horse perishes in the field, or in the stall, by the side of his companions, and is incapable of anticipating the sorrow with which his surrounding associates shall bemoan his death, or pine for his loss; he cannot preconceive this regret, he can form no thought of it; and therefore cannot possibly have a desire to leave such regret or remembrance behind him. Add to the principle of love which exists in the inferior animals, the

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[1] *Ancient Funerall Monuments*, etc., by John Weever (1631). —ED.

[2] This and the other extracts from Camden were taken from his *Remaines concerning Britaine: their Languages, Names, Surnames, Allusions, Anagrammes, Armories, Monies, Empreses, Apparell, Artillarie, Wise Speeches, Proverbs, Poesies, Epitaphes* (1657).—ED.

[3] With this whole paragraph compare Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, stanza xxxv.

> If Death were seen
> At first as Death, Love had not been,
> Or been in narrowest working shut,
>
> Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
> Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
> Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,
> And bask'd and batten'd in the woods. ED.

faculty of reason which exists in Man alone; will the conjunction of these account for the desire? Doubtless it is a necessary consequence of this conjunction; yet not I think as a direct result, but only to be come at through an intermediate thought, viz. that of an intimation or assurance within us, that some part of our nature is imperishable. At least the precedence, in order of birth, of one feeling to the other, is unquestionable. If we look back upon the days of childhood, we shall find that the time is not in remembrance when, with respect to our own individual Being, the mind was without this assurance; whereas, the wish to be remembered by our friends or kindred after death, or even in absence, is, as we shall discover, a sensation that does not form itself till the *social* feelings have been developed, and the Reason has connected itself with a wide range of objects. Forlorn, and cut off from communication with the best part of his nature, must that man be, who should derive the sense of immortality, as it exists in the mind of a child, from the same unthinking gaiety or liveliness of animal spirits with which the lamb in the meadow, or any other irrational creature is endowed; who should ascribe it, in short, to blank ignorance in the child; to an inability arising from the imperfect state of his faculties to come, in any point of his being, into contact with a notion of death; or to an unreflecting acquiescence in what had been instilled into him! Has such an unfolder of the mysteries of nature, though he may have forgotten his former self, ever noticed the early, obstinate, and unappeasable inquisitiveness of children upon the subject of origination? This single fact proves outwardly the monstrousness of those suppositions: for, if we had no direct external testimony that the minds of very young children meditate feelingly upon death and immortality, these inquiries, which we all know they are perpetually making concerning the *whence*, do necessarily include correspondent habits of interrogation concerning the *whither*. Origin and tendency are notions inseparably

co-relative. Never did a child stand by the side of a running stream, pondering within himself what power was the feeder of the perpetual current, from what never-wearied sources the body of water was supplied, but he must have been inevitably propelled to follow this question by another: "Towards what abyss is it in progress? what receptacle can contain the mighty influx?" And the spirit of the answer must have been, though the word might be sea or ocean, accompanied perhaps with an image gathered from a map, or from the real object in nature—these might have been the *letter*, but the *spirit* of the answer must have been *as* inevitably,—a receptacle without bounds or dimensions; —nothing less than infinity. We may, then, be justified in asserting, that the sense of immortality, if not a co-existent and twin birth with Reason, is among the earliest of her offspring: and we may further assert, that from these conjoined, and under their countenance, the human affections are gradually formed and opened out. This is not the place to enter into the recesses of these investigations; but the subject requires me here to make a plain avowal, that, for my own part, it is to me inconceivable, that the sympathies of love towards each other, which grow with our growth, could ever attain any new strength, or even preserve the old, after we had received from the outward senses the impression of death, and were in the habit of having that impression daily renewed and its accompanying feeling brought home to ourselves, and to those we love; if the same were not counteracted by those communications with our internal Being, which are anterior to all these experiences, and with which revelation coincides, and has through that coincidence alone (for otherwise it could not possess it) a power to affect us. I confess, with me the conviction is absolute, that, if the impression and sense of death were not thus counterbalanced, such a hollowness would pervade the whole system of things, such a want of correspondence and consistency, a dis-

proportion so astounding betwixt means and ends, that there could be no repose, no joy. Were we to grow up unfostered by this genial warmth, a frost would chill the spirit, so penetrating and powerful, that there could be no motions of the life of love; and infinitely less could we have any wish to be remembered after we had passed away from a world in which each man had moved about like a shadow.—If, then, in a creature endowed with the faculties of foresight and reason, the social affections could not have unfolded themselves uncountenanced by the faith that Man is an immortal being; and if, consequently, neither could the individual dying have had a desire to survive in the remembrance of his fellows, nor on their side could they have felt a wish to preserve for future times vestiges of the departed; it follows, as a final inference, that without the belief in immortality, wherein these several desires originate, neither monuments nor epitaphs, in affectionate or laudatory commemoration of the deceased, could have existed in the world.

Simonides, it is related, upon landing in a strange country, found the corse of an unknown person lying by the sea-side; he buried it, and was honoured throughout Greece for the piety of that act. Another ancient Philosopher, chancing to fix his eyes upon a dead body, regarded the same with slight, if not with contempt; saying, "See the shell of the flown bird!" But it is not to be supposed that the moral and tender-hearted Simonides was incapable of the lofty movements of thought, to which that other Sage gave way at the moment while his soul was intent only upon the indestructible being; nor, on the other hand, that he, in whose sight a lifeless human body was of no more value than the worthless shell from which the living fowl had departed, would not, in a different mood of mind, have been affected by those earthly considerations which had incited the philosophic Poet to the performance of that pious duty. And with regard to this latter we may be assured that, if he had been destitute of the capability

of communing with the more exalted thoughts that appertain to human nature, he would have cared no more for the corse of the stranger than for the dead body of a seal or porpoise which might have been cast up by the waves. We respect the corporeal frame of Man, not merely because it is the habitation of a rational, but of an immortal Soul. Each of these Sages was in sympathy with the best feelings of our nature; feelings which, though they seem opposite to each other, have another and a finer connection than that of contrast.—It is a connection formed through the subtle process by which, both in the natural and the moral world, qualities pass insensibly into their contraries, and things revolve upon each other. As, in sailing upon the orb of this planet, a voyage towards the regions where the sun sets, conducts gradually to the quarter where we have been accustomed to behold it come forth at its rising; and, in like manner, a voyage towards the east, the birth-place in our imagination of the morning, leads finally to the quarter where the sun is last seen when he departs from our eyes; so the contemplative Soul, travelling in the direction of mortality, advances to the country of everlasting life; and, in like manner, may she continue to explore those cheerful tracts, till she is brought back, for her advantage and benefit, to the land of transitory things—of sorrow and of tears.

On a midway point, therefore, which commands the thoughts and feelings of the two Sages whom we have represented in contrast, does the Author of that species of composition, the laws of which it is our present purpose to explain, take his stand. Accordingly, recurring to the twofold desire of guarding the remains of the deceased and preserving their memory, it may be said that a sepulchral monument is a tribute to a man as a human being; and that an epitaph (in the ordinary meaning attached to the word) includes this general feeling and something more; and is a record to preserve the memory of the dead, as a tribute due to his in-

dividual worth, for a satisfaction to the sorrowing hearts of the survivors, and for the common benefit of the living: which record is to be accomplished, not in a general manner, but, where it can, in *close connection with the bodily remains of the deceased:* and these, it may be added, among the modern nations of Europe, are deposited within, or contiguous to, their places of worship. In ancient times, as is well known, it was the custom to bury the dead beyond the walls of towns and cities; and among the Greeks and Romans they were frequently interred by the way-sides.

I could here pause with pleasure, and invite the Reader to indulge with me in contemplation of the advantages which must have attended such a practice. We might ruminate upon the beauty which the monuments, thus placed, must have borrowed from the surrounding images of nature—from the trees, the wild flowers, from a stream running perhaps within sight or hearing, from the beaten road stretching its weary length hard by. Many tender similitudes must these objects have presented to the mind of the traveller leaning upon one of the tombs, or reposing in the coolness of its shade, whether he had halted from weariness or in compliance with the invitation, "Pause, Traveller!" so often found upon the monuments.[1] And to its epitaph also must have been supplied strong appeals to visible appearances or immediate impressions, lively and affecting analogies of life as a journey—death as a sleep overcoming the tired wayfarer—of misfortune as a storm that falls suddenly upon him—of beauty as a flower that passeth away, or of innocent pleasure as one that may be gathered—of virtue that standeth firm as a rock against the beating waves;—of hope "undermined insensibly like the poplar by the side of the river that has fed it,"

[1] The Siste Viator was kept up long after such roadside interments were abandoned. Crashaw's epitaph for Harris so begins: "Siste te paulum, viator" (Dr. Grosart).—Ed.

or blasted in a moment like a pine-tree by the stroke of lightning upon the mountain-top—of admonitions and heart-stirring remembrances, like a refreshing breeze that comes without warning, or the taste of the waters of an unexpected fountain. These, and similar suggestions, must have given, formerly, to the language of the senseless stone a voice enforced and endeared by the benignity of that Nature with which it was in unison.—We, in modern times, have lost much of these advantages; and they are but in a small degree counterbalanced to the inhabitants of large towns and cities, by the custom of depositing the dead within, or contiguous to, their places of worship; however splendid or imposing may be the appearance of those edifices, or however interesting or salutary the recollections associated with them. Even were it not true that tombs lose their monitory virtue when thus obtruded upon the notice of men occupied with the cares of the world, and too often sullied and defiled by those cares, yet still, when death is in our thoughts, nothing can make amends for the want of the soothing influences of Nature, and for the absence of those types of renovation and decay, which the fields and woods offer to the notice of the serious and contemplative mind. To feel the force of this sentiment, let a man only compare in imagination the unsightly manner in which our monuments are crowded together in the busy, noisy, unclean, and almost grassless churchyard of a large town, with the still seclusion of a Turkish cemetery, in some remote place; and yet further sanctified by the grove of cypress in which it is embosomed. Thoughts in the same temper as these have already been expressed with true sensibility by an ingenuous Poet of the present day. The subject of his poem is "All Saints Church, Derby": he has been deploring the forbidding and unseemly appearance of its burial-ground, and uttering a wish, that in past times the practice had been adopted of interring the inhabitants of large towns in the country.—

Then in some rural, calm, sequestered spot,
Where healing Nature her benignant look
Ne'er changes, save at that lorn season, when,
With tresses drooping o'er her sable stole,
She yearly mourns the mortal doom of man,
Her noblest work, (so Israel's virgins erst,
With annual moan upon the mountains wept
Their fairest gone,) there in that rural scene,
So placid, so congenial to the wish
The Christian feels, of peaceful rest within
The silent grave, I would have stayed :
. . . . . .
I wandered forth, where the cold dew of heaven
Lay on the humbler graves around, what time
The pale moon gazed upon the turfy mounds,
Pensive, as though like me, in lonely muse,
'Twere brooding on the dead inhumed beneath.
There while with him, the holy man of Uz,
O'er human destiny I sympathised,
Counting the long, long periods prophecy
Decrees to roll, ere the great day arrives
Of resurrection, oft the blue-eyed Spring
Had met me with her blossoms, as the Dove,
Of old, returned with olive leaf, to cheer
The Patriarch mourning o'er a world destroyed :
And I would bless her visit ; for to me
'Tis sweet to trace the consonance that links
As one, the works of Nature and the word
Of God.— JOHN EDWARDS.[1]

A village church-yard, lying as it does in the lap of Nature, may indeed be most favourably contrasted with that of a town of crowded population ; and sepulture therein combines many of the best tendencies which belong to the mode practised by the Ancients, with others peculiar to itself. The sensations of pious cheerfulness, which attend the celebration of the sabbath-day in rural places, are profitably chastised by the sight of the graves of kindred and friends, gathered together in

[1] The author of *Kathleen, Abradates and Panthea*, etc., 1808. —ED.

that general home towards which the thoughtful yet happy spectators themselves are journeying. Hence a parish-church, in the stillness of the country, is a visible centre of a community of the living and the dead; a point to which are habitually referred the nearest concerns of both.

As, then, both in cities and villages, the dead are deposited in close connection with our places of worship, with us the composition of an epitaph naturally turns, still more than among the nations of antiquity, upon the most serious and solemn affections of the human mind; upon departed worth—upon personal or social sorrow and admiration—upon religion, individual and social—upon time, and upon eternity. Accordingly, it suffices, in ordinary cases, to secure a composition of this kind from censure, that it contain nothing that shall shock or be inconsistent with this spirit. But, to entitle an epitaph to praise, more than this is necessary. It ought to contain some thought or feeling belonging to the mortal or immortal part of our nature touchingly expressed; and if that be done, however general or even trite the sentiment may be, every man of pure mind will read the words with pleasure and gratitude. A husband bewails a wife; a parent breathes a sigh of disappointed hope over a lost child; a son utters a sentiment of filial reverence for a departed father or mother; a friend perhaps inscribes an encomium recording the companionable qualities, or the solid virtues, of the tenant of the grave, whose departure has left a sadness upon his memory. This and a pious admonition to the living, and a humble expression of Christian confidence in immortality, is the language of a thousand church-yards; and it does not often happen that anything, in a greater degree discriminate or appropriate to the dead or to the living, is to be found in them. This want of discrimination has been ascribed by Dr. Johnson, in his Essay upon the epitaphs of Pope, to two causes; first, the scantiness of the objects of human praise; and, secondly,

the want of variety in the characters of men; or, to use his own words, "to the fact, that the greater part of mankind have no character at all." Such language may be holden without blame among the generalities of common conversation; but does not become a critic and a moralist speaking seriously upon a serious subject. The objects of admiration in human nature are not scanty, but abundant: and every man has a character of his own, to the eye that has skill to perceive it. The real cause of the acknowledged want of discrimination in sepulchral memorials is this: That to analyse the characters of others, especially of those whom we love, is not a common or natural employment of men at any time. We are not anxious unerringly to understand the constitution of the minds of those who have soothed, who have cheered, who have supported us: with whom we have been long and daily pleased or delighted. The affections are their own justification. The light of love in our hearts is a satisfactory evidence that there is a body of worth in the minds of our friends or kindred, whence that light has proceeded. We shrink from the thought of placing their merits and defects to be weighed against each other in the nice balance of pure intellect; nor do we find much temptation to detect the shades by which a good quality or virtue is discriminated in them from an excellence known by the same general name as it exists in the mind of another; and, least of all, do we incline to these refinements when under the pressure of sorrow, admiration, or regret, or when actuated by any of those feelings which incite men to prolong the memory of their friends and kindred, by records placed in the bosom of the all-uniting and equalising receptacle of the dead.[1]

[1] Compare, in the tale of *Rosamund Gray* by Charles Lamb—

"Still I continued in the churchyard, reading the various inscriptions, and moralising on them with that kind of levity, which will not unfrequently spring up in the mind, in the midst of deep melancholy.

"I read of nothing but careful parents, loving husbands, and

The first requisite, then, in an Epitaph is, that it should speak, in a tone which shall sink into the heart, the general language of humanity as connected with the subject of death—the source from which an epitaph proceeds—of death, and of life. To be born and to die are the two points in which all men feel themselves to be in absolute coincidence. This general language may be uttered so strikingly as to entitle an epitaph to high praise; yet it cannot lay claim to the highest unless other excellencies be superadded. Passing through all intermediate steps, we will attempt to determine at once what these excellencies are, and wherein consists the perfection of this species of composition.—It will be found to lie in a due proportion of the common or universal feeling of humanity to sensations excited by a distinct and clear conception, conveyed to the reader's mind, of the individual, whose death is deplored and whose memory is to be preserved; at least of his character as, after death, it appeared to those who loved him and lament his loss. The general sympathy ought to be quickened, provoked, and diversified, by particular thoughts, actions, images,—circumstances of age, occupation, manner of life, prosperity which the deceased had known, or adversity to which he had been subject; and these ought to be bound together and solemnised into one harmony by the general sympathy. The two powers should temper, restrain, and exalt each other. The reader ought to know who and what the man was whom he is called upon to think of with interest. A

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dutiful children. I said jestingly, where be all the *bad* people buried? Bad parents, bad husbands, bad children—what cemeteries are appointed for these? do they not sleep in consecrated ground? or is it but a pious fiction, a generous oversight, in the survivors, which thus tricks out men's epitaphs when dead, who in their lifetime discharged the offices of life, perhaps, but lamely? Their failings, with their reproaches, now sleep with them in the grave. *Man wars not with the dead.* It is a *trait* of Human Nature, for which I love it."—ED.

distinct conception should be given (implicitly where it can, rather than explicitly) of the individual lamented. —But the writer of an epitaph is not an anatomist, who dissects the internal frame of the mind; he is not even a painter, who executes a portrait at leisure and in entire tranquillity; his delineation, we must remember, is performed by the side of the grave; and, what is more, the grave of one whom he loves and admires. What purity and brightness is that virtue clothed in, the image of which must no longer bless our living eyes! The character of a deceased friend or beloved kinsman is not seen, no—nor ought to be seen, otherwise than as a tree through a tender haze or a luminous mist, that spiritualises and beautifies it; that takes away, indeed, but only to the end that the parts which are not abstracted may appear more dignified and lovely; may impress and affect the more. Shall we say, then, that this is not truth, not a faithful image; and that, accordingly, the purposes of commemoration cannot be answered?—It *is* truth, and of the highest order; for, though doubtless things are not apparent which did exist; yet, the object being looked at through this medium, parts and proportions are brought into distinct view which before had been only imperfectly or unconsciously seen: it is truth hallowed by love—the joint offspring of the worth of the dead and the affections of the living! This may easily be brought to the test. Let one, whose eyes have been sharpened by personal hostility to discover what was amiss in the character of a good man, hear the tidings of his death, and what a change is wrought in a moment! Enmity melts away; and, as it disappears, unsightliness, disproportion, and deformity, vanish; and, through the influence of commiseration, a harmony of love and beauty succeeds. Bring such a man to the tombstone on which shall be inscribed an epitaph on his adversary, composed in the spirit which we have recommended. Would he turn from it as from an idle tale? No;—the thoughtful

look, the sigh, and perhaps the involuntary tear, would testify that it had a sane, a generous, and good meaning; and that on the writer's mind had remained an impression which was a true abstract of the character of the deceased; that his gifts and graces were remembered in the simplicity in which they ought to be remembered. The composition and quality of the mind of a virtuous man, contemplated by the side of the grave where his body is mouldering, ought to appear, and be felt as something midway between what he was on earth walking about with his living frailties, and what he may be presumed to be as a spirit in heaven.

It suffices, therefore, that the trunk and the main branches of the worth of the deceased be boldly and unaffectedly represented. Any further detail, minutely and scrupulously pursued, especially if this be done with laborious and antithetic discriminations, must inevitably frustrate its own purpose; forcing the passing Spectator to this conclusion,—either that the dead did not possess the merits ascribed to him, or that they who have raised a monument to his memory, and must therefore be supposed to have been closely connected with him, were incapable of perceiving those merits; or at least during the act of composition had lost sight of them; for, the understanding having been so busy in its petty occupation, how could the heart of the mourner be other than cold? and in either of these cases, whether the fault be on the part of the buried person or the survivors, the memorial is unaffecting and profitless.

Much better is it to fall short in discrimination than to pursue it too far, or to labour it unfeelingly. For in no place are we so much disposed to dwell upon those points, of nature and condition, wherein all men resemble each other, as in the temple where the universal Father is worshipped, or by the side of the grave which gathers all human Beings to itself, and "equalises the lofty and the low." We suffer and we weep with the same heart; we love and are anxious for one another in one spirit;

our hopes look to the same quarter; and the virtues by which we are all to be furthered and supported, as patience, meekness, good-will, justice, temperance, and temperate desires, are in an equal degree the concern of us all. Let an Epitaph, then, contain at least these acknowledgments to our common nature; nor let the sense of their importance be sacrificed to a balance of opposite qualities or minute distinctions in individual character; which if they do not, (as will for the most part be the case,) when examined, resolve themselves into a trick of words, will, even when they are true and just, for the most part be grievously out of place; for, as it is probable that few only have explored these intricacies of human nature, so can the tracing of them be interesting only to a few. But an epitaph is not a proud writing shut up for the studious: it is exposed to all—to the wise and the most ignorant; it is condescending, perspicuous, and lovingly solicits regard; its story and admonitions are brief, that the thoughtless, the busy, and indolent, may not be deterred, nor the impatient tired: the stooping old man cons the engraven record like a second horn-book;—the child is proud that he can read it;—and the stranger is introduced through its mediation to the company of a friend: it is concerning all, and for all:—in the church-yard it is open to the day; the sun looks down upon the stone, and the rains of heaven beat against it.

Yet, though the writer who would excite sympathy is bound in this case, more than in any other, to give proof that he himself has been moved, it is to be remembered, that to raise a monument is a sober and a reflective act; that the inscription which it bears is intended to be permanent, and for universal perusal; and that, for this reason, the thoughts and feelings expressed should be permanent also—liberated from that weakness and anguish of sorrow which is in nature transitory, and which with instinctive decency retires from notice. The passions should be subdued, the

emotions controlled; strong, indeed, but nothing ungovernable or wholly involuntary. Seemliness requires this, and truth requires it also: for how can the narrator otherwise be trusted? Moreover, a grave is a tranquillising object: resignation in course of time springs up from it as naturally as the wild flowers, besprinkling the turf with which it may be covered, or gathering round the monument by which it is defended. The very form and substance of the monument which has received the inscription, and the appearance of the letters, testifying with what a slow and laborious hand they must have been engraven, might seem to reproach the author who had given way upon this occasion to transports of mind, or to quick turns of conflicting passion; though the same might constitute the life and beauty of a funeral oration or elegiac poem.

These sensations and judgments, acted upon perhaps unconsciously, have been one of the main causes why epitaphs so often personate the deceased, and represent him as speaking from his own tomb-stone. The departed Mortal is introduced telling you himself that his pains are gone; that a state of rest is come; and he conjures you to weep for him no longer. He admonishes with the voice of one experienced in the vanity of those affections which are confined to earthly objects, and gives a verdict like a superior Being, performing the office of a judge, who has no temptations to mislead him, and whose decision cannot but be dispassionate. Thus is death disarmed of its sting, and affliction unsubstantialised. By this tender fiction, the survivors bind themselves to a sedater sorrow, and employ the intervention of the imagination in order that the reason may speak her own language earlier than she would otherwise have been enabled to do. This shadowy interposition also harmoniously unites the two worlds of the living and the dead by their appropriate affections. And it may be observed, that here we have an additional proof of the propriety with which sepulchral inscriptions were referred

to the consciousness of immortality as their primal source.

I do not speak with a wish to recommend that an epitaph should be cast in this mould preferably to the still more common one, in which what is said comes from the survivors directly; but rather to point out how natural those feelings are which have induced men, in all states and ranks of society, so frequently to adopt this mode. And this I have done chiefly in order that the laws, which ought to govern the composition of the other, may be better understood. This latter mode, namely, that in which the survivors speak in their own persons, seems to me upon the whole greatly preferable: as it admits a wider range of notices; and, above all, because, excluding the fiction which is the groundwork of the other, it rests upon a more solid basis.

Enough has been said to convey our notion of a perfect epitaph; but it must be borne in mind that one is meant which will best answer the *general* ends of that species of composition. According to the course pointed out, the worth of private life, through all varieties of situation and character, will be most honourably and profitably preserved in memory. Nor would the model recommended less suit public men, in all instances save of those persons who by the greatness of their services in the employments of peace or war, or by the surpassing excellence of their works in art, literature, or science, have made themselves not only universally known, but have filled the heart of their country with everlasting gratitude. Yet I must here pause to correct myself. In describing the general tenor of thought which epitaphs ought to hold, I have omitted to say, that if it be the *actions* of a man, or even some *one* conspicuous or beneficial act of local or general utility, which have distinguished him, and excited a desire that he should be remembered, then, of course, ought the attention to be directed chiefly to those actions or that act: and such sentiments dwelt upon as naturally arise out of them or it. Having made

this necessary distinction, I proceed.—The mighty benefactors of mankind, as they are not only known by the immediate survivors, but will continue to be known familiarly to latest posterity, do not stand in need of biographic sketches, in such a place; nor of delineations of character to individualise them. This is already done by their Works, in the memories of men. Their naked names, and a grand comprehensive sentiment of civic gratitude, patriotic love, or human admiration—or the utterance of some elementary principle most essential in the constitution of true virtue;—or a declaration touching that pious humility and self-abasement, which are ever most profound as minds are most susceptible of genuine exaltation—or an intuition, communicated in adequate words, of the sublimity of intellectual power; —these are the only tribute which can here be paid—the only offering that upon such an altar would not be unworthy.[1]

> What needs my Shakspeare for his honoured bones
> The labour of an age in pilèd stones,
> Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
> Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
> Dear Son of Memory, great Heir of Fame,
> What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
> Thou in our wonder and astonishment
> Hast built thyself a livelong monument.
> And so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,
> That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.[2]

[1] Charles Lamb wrote to Wordsworth, "Your Essay on Epitaphs is the only sensible thing which has been written on that subject, and it goes to the bottom." Wordsworth's Elegy on Lamb, written in 1835, was, his nephew tells us, originally designed as an epitaph. —ED.

[2] See Milton's lines, entitled *An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet, William Shakspeare.*—ED.

XI

UPON EPITAPHS (II)

THE COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD, AND CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF ANCIENT EPITAPHS [1]

Yet even these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.
Their name, their years, spelt by the unletter'd Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply,
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.[2]

WHEN a Stranger has walked round a Country Church-yard and glanced his eye over so many brief chronicles, as the tomb-stones usually contain, of faithful wives, tender husbands, dutiful children, and good men of all classes; he will be tempted to exclaim in the language of one of the characters of a modern Tale, in a similar situation, "Where are all the *bad* people buried?" He may smile to himself an answer to this question, and may regret that it has intruded upon him so soon. For my own part such has been my lot; and indeed a man, who is in the habit of suffering his mind to be carried passively towards truth as well as of going with conscious effort in search of it, may be forgiven, if he has some-

[1] As I have explained in the Preface, this second essay was first published in the "Prose Works" of 1876. I do not think the title which Dr. Grosart gave it is Wordsworth's, but as there is no access to the original MS. Dr. Grosart's title is retained.—ED.

[2] See Gray's *Elegy in a Country Church-yard*, ll. 77-84.—ED.

times insensibly yielded to the delusion of those flattering recitals, and found a pleasure in believing that the prospect of real life had been as fair as it was in that picture represented. And such a transitory oversight will without difficulty be forgiven by those who have observed a trivial fact in daily life, namely, how apt, in a series of calm weather, we are to forget that rain and storms have been, and will return to interrupt any scheme of business or pleasure which our minds are occupied in arranging. Amid the quiet of a church-yard thus decorated as it seemed by the hand of Memory, and shining, if I may so say, in the light of love, I have been affected by sensations akin to those which have risen in my mind while I have been standing by the side of a smooth sea, on a Summer's day. It is such a happiness to have, in an unkind world, one enclosure where the voice of Detraction is not heard; where the traces of evil inclinations are unknown; where contentment prevails, and there is no jarring tone in the peaceful concert of amity and gratitude. I have been roused from this reverie by a consciousness suddenly flashing upon me, of the anxieties, the perturbations, and in many instances, the vices and rancorous dispositions, by which the hearts of those who lie under so smooth a surface and so fair an outside have been agitated. The image of an unruffled sea has still remained; but my fancy has penetrated into the depths of that sea,—with accompanying thoughts of shipwreck, of the destruction of the mariner's hopes, the bones of drowned men heaped together, monsters of the deep, and all the hideous and confused sights which Clarence saw in his dream.

Nevertheless, I have been able to return (and who may *not?*) to a steady contemplation of the benign influence of such a favourable Register lying open to the eyes of all. Without being so far lulled as to imagine I saw in a village church-yard the eye or central point of a rural Arcadia, I have felt that with all the vague and

general expressions of love, gratitude, and praise, with which it is usually crowded, it is a far more faithful representation of homely life as existing among a community in which circumstances have not been untoward, than any report which might be made by a rigorous observer deficient in that spirit of forbearance and those kindly prepossessions, without which human life can in no condition be profitably looked at or described. For we must remember that it is the nature of vice to force itself upon notice, both in the act and by its consequences. Drunkenness, cruelty, brutal manners, sensuality and impiety, thoughtless prodigality and idleness, are obstreperous while they are in the height and heyday of their enjoyment; and when that is passed away, long and obtrusive is the train of misery which they draw after them. But on the contrary, the virtues, especially those of humble life, are retired; and many of the highest must be sought for or they will be overlooked. Industry, economy, temperance, and cleanliness, are indeed made obvious by flourishing fields, rosy complexions, and smiling countenances; but how few know anything of the trials to which men in a lonely condition are subject, or of the steady and triumphant manner in which those trials are often sustained, but they themselves? The afflictions which peasants and rural citizens have to struggle with are for the most part secret; the tears which they wipe away, and the sighs which they stifle,—this is all a labour of privacy. In fact their victories are to themselves known only imperfectly; for it is inseparable from virtue, in the pure sense of the word, to be unconscious of the might of her own prowess. This is true of minds the most enlightened by reflection; who have forecast what they may have to endure, and prepared themselves accordingly. It is true even of these, when they are called into action, that they necessarily lose sight of their own accomplishments and support their conflicts in self-forgetfulness and humility. That species of happy

ignorance, which is the consequence of these noble qualities, must exist still more frequently, and in a greater degree, in those persons to whom duty has never been matter of laborious speculation, and who have no intimations of the power to act and to resist which is in them, till they are summoned to put it forth. I could illustrate this by many examples, which are now before my eyes; but it would detain me too long from my principal subject which was to suggest reasons for believing that the encomiastic language of rural tomb-stones does not so far exceed reality as might lightly be supposed. Doubtless, an inattentive or ill-disposed Observer, who should apply to surrounding cottages the knowledge which he may possess of any rural neighbourhood, would upon the first impulse confidently report that there was little in their living inhabitants which reflected the concord and the virtue there dwelt upon so fondly. Much has been said in a former Paper tending to correct this disposition; and which will naturally combine with the present considerations. Besides, to slight the uniform language of these memorials as on that account not trustworthy would obviously be unjustifiable.

Enter a church-yard by the sea-coast, and you will be almost sure to find the tomb-stones crowded with metaphors taken from the sea and a sea-faring life. These are uniformly in the same strain; but surely we ought not thence to infer that the words are used of course, without any heartfelt sense of their propriety. Would not the contrary conclusion be right? But I will adduce a fact which more than a hundred analogical arguments will carry to the mind a conviction of the strength and sanctity of those feelings which persons in humble stations of society connect with their departed friends and kindred. We learn from the Statistical Account of Scotland that in some districts, a general transfer of inhabitants has taken place; and that a great majority of those who live, and labour, and attend public

worship in one part of the country, are buried in another. Strong and unconquerable still continues to be the desire of all, that their bones should rest by the side of their forefathers, and very poor persons provide that their bodies should be conveyed if necessary to a great distance to obtain that last satisfaction. Nor can I refrain from saying that this natural interchange by which the living inhabitants of a parish have small knowledge of the dead who are buried in their church-yard is grievously to be lamented, wherever it exists. For it cannot fail to preclude not merely much but the best part of the wholesome influence of that communion between living and dead which the conjunction in rural districts of the place of burial and place of worship tends so effectually to promote. Finally, let us remember that if it be the nature of man to be insensible to vexations and afflictions when they have passed away, he is equally insensible to the height and depth of his blessings till they are removed from him. An experienced and well-regulated mind, will not, therefore, be insensible to this monotonous language of sorrow and affectionate admiration; but will find under that veil a substance of individual truth. Yet upon all men, and upon such a mind in particular, an Epitaph must strike with a gleam of pleasure, when the expression is of that kind which carries conviction to the heart at once that the author was a sincere mourner, and that the inhabitant of the grave deserved to be so lamented. This may be done sometimes by a naked ejaculation; as in an instance which a friend of mine met with in a church-yard in Germany, thus literally translated: "Ah! they have laid in the grave a brave man: he was to me more than many!"

Ach! sie haben
Einen Braven
Mann begraben
Mir war er mehr als viele.

An effect as pleasing is often produced by the recital of

an affliction endured with fortitude, or of a privation submitted to with contentment ; or by a grateful display of the temporal blessings with which Providence had favoured the deceased, and the happy course of life through which he had passed. And where these individualities are untouched upon, it may still happen that the estate of man in his helplessness, in his dependence upon his Maker, or some other inherent of his nature shall be movingly and profitably expressed. Every Reader will be able to supply from his own observation instances of all these kinds, and it will be more pleasing for him to refer to his memory than to have the page crowded with unnecessary quotations. I will however give one or two from an old book cited before. The following of general application, was a great favourite with our forefathers :

> Farwel my Frendys, the tyd abidyth no man,
> I am departed hens, and so sal ye,
> But in this passage the best song I can
> Is *Requiem Eternam*, now Jesu grant it me.
> When I have ended all myn adversity
> Grant me in Paradys to have a mansion
> That shedst Thy bloud for my redemption.

This epitaph might seem to be of the age of Chaucer, for it has the very tone and manner of the Prioress's Tale.

The next opens with a thought somewhat interrupting that complacency and gracious repose which the language and imagery of a church-yard tend to diffuse, but the truth is weighty and will not be less acceptable for the rudeness of the expression.

> When the bells be merrely roung
> And the Masse devoutly soung
> And the meate merrely eaten
> Then sall Robert Trappis his Wyffs and his Chyldren be forgotten.
> Wherfor Iesu that of Mary sproung
> Set their soulys Thy Saynts among

Though it be undeservyd on their syde
Yet good Lord let them evermor Thy mercy abyde !

It is well known how fond our ancestors were of a play upon the name of the deceased when it admitted of a double sense. The following is an instance of this propensity not idly indulged. It brings home a general truth to the individual by the medium of a pun, which will be readily pardoned for the sake of the image suggested by it, for the happy mood of mind in which the epitaph is composed, for the beauty of the language, and for the sweetness of the versification, which indeed, the date considered, is not a little curious. It is upon a man whose name was Palmer. I have modernised the spelling in order that its uncouthness may not interrupt the Reader's gratification.

Palmers all our Fathers were
I a Palmer livèd here
And travelled still till worn with age
I ended this world's pilgrimage,
On the blest Ascension-day
In the chearful month of May ;
One thousand with four hundred seven,
And took my journey hence to heaven.

With this join the following, which was formerly to be seen upon a fair marble under the portraiture of one of the abbots of St. Albans.

Hic quidem terra tegitur
Peccati solvens debitum
Cujus nomen non impositum
In libro vitae sit inscriptum.

The spirit of it may be thus given : "Here lies, covered by the earth, and paying his debt to sin, one whose name is not set forth : may it be inscribed in the Book of Life !"

But these instances, of the humility, the pious faith and simplicity of our forefathers, have led me from the scene of our contemplations—a Country Church-yard !

and from the memorials at this day commonly found in it. I began with noticing such as might be wholly uninteresting from the uniformity of the language which they exhibit; because, without previously participating the truths upon which these general attestations are founded, it is impossible to arrive at that state of disposition of mind necessary to make those epitaphs thoroughly felt which have an especial recommendation. With the same view, I will venture to say a few words upon another characteristic of these compositions almost equally striking; namely, the homeliness of some of the inscriptions, the strangeness of the illustrative images, the grotesque spelling, with the equivocal meaning often struck out by it, and the quaint jingle of the rhymes. These have often excited regret in serious minds, and provoked the unwilling to good-humoured laughter. Yet, for my own part, without affecting any superior sanctity, I must say that I have been better satisfied with myself, when in these evidences I have seen a proof how deeply the piety of the rude forefathers of the hamlet, is seated in their natures; I mean how habitual and constitutional it is, and how awful the feeling which they attach to the situation of their departed friends,—a proof of this rather than of their ignorance or of a deadness in their faculties to a sense of the ridiculous. And that this deduction may be just, is rendered probable by the frequent occurrence of passages according to our present notion, full as ludicrous, in the writings of the most wise and learned men of former ages, divines and poets, who in the earnestness of their souls have applied metaphors and illustrations, taken either from Holy Writ or from the usages of their own country, in entire confidence that the sacredness of the theme they were discussing would sanctify the meanest object connected with it; or rather without ever conceiving it was possible that a ludicrous thought could spring up in any mind engaged in such meditations. And certainly, these odd and fantastic combinations are not confined to epitaphs

of the peasantry, or of the lower orders of society, but are perhaps still more commonly produced among the higher, in a degree equally or more striking. For instance, what shall we say to this upon Sir George Vane, the noted Secretary of State to King Charles I.?

> His Honour wonne i'th' field lies here in dust,
> His Honour got by grace shall never rust:
> The former fades, the latter shall fade never
> For why? He was S^r George once but S^t George ever.

The date is 1679. When we reflect that the father of this personage must have had his taste formed in the punning Court of James I., and that the epitaph was composed at a time when our literature was stuffed with quaint or out-of-the-way thoughts, it will seem not unlikely that the author prided himself upon what he might call a clever hit: I mean his better affections were less occupied with the several associations belonging to the two ideas than his vanity delighted with that act of ingenuity by which they had been combined. But the first couplet consists of a just thought naturally expressed; and I should rather conclude the whole to be a work of honest simplicity; and that the sense of worldly dignity associated with the title, in a degree habitual to our ancestors, but which at this time we can but feebly sympathise with, and the imaginative feeling involved—viz. the saintly and chivalrous name of the champion of England, were unaffectedly linked together: and that both were united and consolidated in the author's mind, and in the minds of his contemporaries whom no doubt he had pleased, by a devout contemplation of a happy immortality, the reward of the just.

At all events, leaving this particular case undecided, the general propriety of these notices cannot be doubted; and I gladly avail myself of this opportunity to place in a clear view the power and majesty of impassioned faith, whatever be its object: to shew how it subjugates

the lighter motions of the mind, and sweeps away superficial difference in things. And this I have done, not to lower the witling and the worldling in their own esteem, but with a wish to bring the ingenuous into still closer communion with those primary sensations of the human heart, which are the vital springs of sublime and pathetic composition, in this and in every other kind. And as from these primary sensations such composition speaks, so, unless correspondent ones listen promptly and submissively in the inner cell of the mind to whom it is addressed, the voice cannot be heard ; its highest powers are wasted.

These suggestions may be further useful to establish a criterion of sincerity, by which a writer may be judged ; and this is of high import. For, when a man is treating an interesting subject, or one which he ought not to treat at all unless he be interested, no faults have such a killing power as those which prove that he is not in earnest, that he is acting a part, has leisure for affectation, and feels that without it he could do nothing. This is one of the most odious of faults ; because it shocks the moral sense, and is worse in a sepulchral inscription, precisely in the same degree as that mode of composition calls for sincerity more urgently than any other. And indeed where the internal evidence proves that the writer was moved, in other words where this charm of sincerity lurks in the language of a tomb-stone and secretly pervades it, there are no errors in style or manner for which it will not be, in some degree, a recompense ; but without habits of reflection a test of this inward simplicity cannot be come at ; and as I have said, I am now writing with a hope to assist the well-disposed to attain it.

Let us take an instance where no one can be at a loss. The following lines are said to have been written by the illustrious Marquis of Montrose with the point of his sword, upon being informed of the death of his master, Charles I. :

Great, good, and just, could I but rate
My griefs, and thy too rigid fate;
I'd weep the world to such a strain,
As it should deluge once again.
But since thy loud-tongued blood demands supplies,
More from Briareus' hands than Argus' eyes,
I'll sing thy obsequies with trumpet sounds
And write thy epitaph with blood and wounds.[1]

These funereal verses would certainly be wholly out of their place upon a tombstone; but who can doubt that the writer was transported to the height of the occasion? that he was moved as it became an heroic soldier, holding those principles and opinions, to be moved? His soul labours;—the most tremendous event in the history of the planet—namely, the deluge, is brought before his imagination by the physical image of tears,—a connection awful from its very remoteness and from the slender band that unites the ideas:—it passes into the region of fable likewise; for all modes of existence that forward his purpose are to be pressed into the service. The whole is instinct with spirit, and every word has its separate life; like the chariot of the Messiah, and the wheels of that chariot, as they appeared to the imagination of Milton aided by that of the prophet Ezekiel. It had power to move of itself, but was conveyed by cherubs.

. . . with stars their bodies all
And wings were set with eyes, with eyes the wheels
Of beryl, and careering fires between.[2]

Compare with the above verses of Montrose the following epitaph upon Sir Philip Sidney, which was formerly placed over his grave in St. Paul's Church.

England, Netherland, the Heavens, and the Arts,
The Soldiers, and the World, have made six parts

[1] See *The Courtly Poets from Raleigh to Montrose*, by John Hannah (1870), p. 207.—ED.

[2] See *Paradise Lost*, book vi. ll. 754-756.—ED.

> Of noble Sidney; for who will suppose
> That a small heap of stones can Sidney enclose?
> England hath his Body, for she it fed,
> Netherland his Blood, in her defence shed:
> The Heavens have his Soul, the Arts have his Fame,
> The Soldiers the grief, the World his good Name.

There were many points in which the case of Sidney resembled that of Charles I. He was a sovereign, but of a nobler kind—a sovereign in the hearts of men; and after his premature death he was truly, as he hath been styled, "the world-mourned Sidney." So fondly did the admiration of his contemporaries settle upon him, that the sudden removal of a man so good, great, and thoroughly accomplished, wrought upon many even to repining, and to the questioning the dispensations of Providence. Yet he, whom Spenser and all the men of genius of his age had tenderly bemoaned, is thus commemorated upon his tomb-stone; and to add to the indignity, the memorial is nothing more than the second-hand coat of a French commander! It is a servile translation from a French epitaph, which says Weever, "was by some English Wit happily imitated and ingeniously applied to the honour of our worthy chieftain." Yet Weever in a foregoing paragraph thus expresses himself upon the same subject; giving without his own knowledge, in my opinion, an example of the manner in which an epitaph ought to have been composed: "But I cannot pass over in silence Sir Philip Sidney, the elder brother, being (to use Camden's words) the glorious star of this family, a lively pattern of virtue, and the lovely joy of all the learned sort; who fighting valiantly with the enemy before Zutphen in Geldesland, dyed manfully. This is that Sidney, whom, as God's will was, he should therefore be born into the world even to shew unto our age a sample of ancient virtues: so His good pleasure was, before any man looked for it, to call for him again and take him out of the world, as being more worthy of heaven than earth. Thus we

may see perfect virtue suddenly vanisheth out of sight, and the best men continue not long."

There can be no need to analyse this simple effusion of the moment in order to contrast it with the laboured composition before given; the difference will flash upon the Reader at once. But I may say it is not likely that such a frigid composition as the former would have ever been applied to a man whose death had so stirred up the hearts of his contemporaries, if it had not been felt that something different from that nature which each man carried in his own breast was in his case requisite; and that a certain straining of mind was inseparable from the subject. Accordingly, an epitaph is adopted in which the Writer had turned from the genuine affections and their self-forgetting inspirations, to the end that his understanding, or the faculty designated by the word *head* as opposed to *heart*, might curiously construct a fabric to be wondered at. Hyperbole in the language of Montrose is a mean instrument made mighty because wielded by an afflicted soul, and strangeness is here the order of Nature. Montrose stretched after remote things, but was at the same time propelled towards them; the French Writer goes deliberately in search of them: no wonder then if what he brings home does not prove worth the carriage.

Let us return to an instance of common life. I quote it with reluctance, not so much for its absurdity as that the expression in one place will strike at first sight as little less than impious; and it is indeed, though unintentionally so, most irreverent. But I know no other example that will so forcibly illustrate the important truth I wish to establish. The following epitaph is to be found in a church-yard in Westmoreland; which the present Writer has reason to think of with interest as it contains the remains of some of his ancestors and kindred. The date is 1673.

Under this Stone, Reader, inter'd doth lye,
Beauty and Virtue's true epitomy.

At her appearance the noone-son
Blush'd and shrunk in 'cause quite outdon.
In her concentered did all graces dwell:
God pluck'd my rose that He might take a smel.
I'll say no more: but weeping wish I may
Soone with thy dear chaste ashes com to lay.
Sic efflevit Maritus.

Can anything go beyond this in extravagance? yet, if the fundamental thoughts be translated into a natural style, they will be found reasonable and affecting—"The woman who lies here interred, was in my eyes a perfect image of beauty and virtue; she was to me a brighter object than the sun in heaven: God took her, who was my delight, from this earth to bring her nearer to Himself. Nothing further is worthy to be said than that weeping I wish soon to lie by thy dear chaste ashes. Thus did the husband pour out his tears."

These verses are preceded by a brief account of the lady, in Latin prose, in which the little that is said is the uncorrupted language of affection. But, without this introductory communication I should myself have had no doubt, after recovering from the first shock of surprise and disapprobation, that this man, notwithstanding his extravagant expressions, was a sincere mourner; and that his heart, during the very act of composition, was moved. These fantastic images, though they stain the writing, stained not her soul,—they did not even touch it; but hung like globules of rain suspended above a green leaf, along which they may roll and leave no trace that they have passed over it. This simple-hearted man must have been betrayed by a common notion that what was natural in prose would be out of place in verse;—that it is not the Muse which puts on the garb but the garb which makes the Muse. And having adopted this notion at a time when vicious writings of this kind accorded with the public taste, it is probable that, in the excess of his modesty, the blankness of his inexperience, and the intensity of his affection, he thought that the

further he wandered from Nature in his language the more would he honour his departed consort, who now appeared to him to have surpassed humanity in the excellence of her endowments. The quality of his fault and its very excess are both in favour of this conclusion.

Let us contrast this epitaph with one taken from a celebrated Writer of the last century.

To the memory of LUCY LYTTLETON, *Daughter etc. who departed this life etc. aged* 20. *Having employed the short time assigned to her here in the uniform practice of religion and virtue.*

Made to engage all hearts, and charm all eyes,
Though meek, magnanimous; though witty, wise;
Polite, as all her life in Courts had been;
Yet good, as she the world had never seen;
The noble fire of an exalted mind,
With gentle female tenderness combined.
Her speech was the melodious voice of love,
Her song the warbling of the vernal grove;
Her eloquence was sweeter than her song,
Soft as her heart, and as her reason strong;
Her form each beauty of the mind express'd,
Her mind was Virtue by the Graces drest.

The prose part of this inscription has the appearance of being intended for a tomb-stone; but there is nothing in the verse that would suggest such a thought. The composition is in the style of those laboured portraits in words which we sometimes see placed at the bottom of a print to fill up lines of expression which the bungling Artist had left imperfect. We know from other evidence that Lord Lyttleton dearly loved his wife; he has indeed composed a monody to her memory which proves this, and she was an amiable woman; neither of which facts could have been gathered from these inscriptive verses. This epitaph would derive little advantage from being translated into another style as the former was; for there is no under current; no skeleton or staminæ of thought and feeling. The Reader will perceive at once

that nothing in the heart of the Writer had determined either the choice, the order or the expression, of the ideas; that there is no interchange of action from within and from without; that the connections are mechanical and arbitrary, and the lowest kind of these—heart and eyes: petty alliterations, as meek and magnanimous, witty and wise, combined with oppositions in thoughts where there is no necessary or natural opposition. Then follow voice, song, eloquence, form, mind—each enumerated by a separate act as if the Author had been making a *Catalogue Raisonné.*

These defects run through the whole; the only tolerable verse is,

Her speech was the melodious voice of love.

Observe, the question is not which of these epitaphs is better or worse; but which faults are of a worse kind. In the former case we have a mourner whose soul is occupied by grief and urged forward by his admiration. He deems in his simplicity that no hyperbole can transcend the perfections of her whom he has lost; for the version which I have given fairly demonstrates that, in spite of his outrageous expressions, the under current of his thoughts was natural and pure. We have therefore in him the example of a mind during the act of composition misled by false taste to the highest possible degree; and, in that of Lord Lyttleton, we have one of a feeling heart, not merely misled, but wholly laid asleep by the same power. Lord Lyttleton could not have written in this way upon such a subject, if he had not been seduced by the example of Pope, whose sparkling and tuneful manner had bewitched the men of letters his contemporaries, and corrupted the judgment of the nation through all ranks of society. So that a great portion of original genius was necessary to embolden a man to write faithfully to Nature upon any affecting subject if it belonged to a class of composition in which Pope had furnished examples.

I am anxious not to be misunderstood. It has already been stated that in this species of composition above every other, our sensations and judgments depend upon our opinion or feeling of the Author's state of mind. Literature is here so far identified with morals, the quality of the act so far determined by our notion of the aim and purpose of the agent, that nothing can please us, however well executed in its kind, if we are persuaded that the primary virtues of sincerity, earnestness and a moral interest in the main object are wanting. Insensibility here shocks us, and still more so if manifested by a Writer going wholly out of his way in search of supposed beauties, which if he were truly moved he could set no value upon, could not even think of. We are struck in this case not merely with a sense of disproportion and unfitness, but we cannot refrain from attributing no small part of his intellectual to a moral demerit. And here the difficulties of the question begin, namely in ascertaining what errors in the choice of or the mode of expressing the thoughts, most surely indicate the want of that which is most indispensable. Bad taste, whatever shape it may put on, is injurious to the heart and the understanding. If a man attaches much interest to the faculty of taste as it exists in himself and employs much time in those studies of which this faculty (I use the word taste in its comprehensive though most unjustifiable sense) is reckoned the arbiter, certain it is his moral notions and dispositions must either be purified and strengthened or corrupted and impaired. How can it be otherwise, when his ability to enter into the spirit of works in literature must depend upon his feelings, his imagination and his understanding, that is upon his recipient, upon his creative or active and upon his judging powers, and upon the accuracy and compass of his knowledge, in fine upon all that makes up the moral and intellectual man. What is true of individuals is equally true of nations. Nevertheless a man called to a task in which he is not practised, may have his expression

thoroughly defiled and clogged by the style prevalent in his age, yet still, through the force of circumstances that have roused him, his under feeling may remain strong and pure ; yet this may be wholly concealed from common view. Indeed the favourite style of different ages is so different and wanders so far from propriety that if it were not that first rate Writers in all nations and tongues are governed by common principles, we might suppose that truth and nature were things not to be looked for in books ; hence to an unpractised Reader the productions of every age will present obstacles in various degrees hard to surmount ; a deformity of style not the worst in itself but of that kind with which he is least familiar will on the one hand be most likely to render him insensible to a pith and power which may be within, and on the other hand he will be the least able to see through that sort of falsehood which is most prevalent in the works of his own time. Many of my Readers, to apply these general observations to the present case, must have derived pleasure from the epitaph of Lord Lyttleton and no doubt will be startled at the comparison I have made ; but bring it to the test recommended it will then be found that its faults, though not in degree so intolerable, are in kind more radical and deadly than those of the strange composition with which it has been compared.

The course which we have taken having brought us to the name of this distinguished Writer—Pope—I will in this place give a few observations upon his Epitaphs, —the largest collection we have in our language, from the pen of any Writer of eminence. As the epitaphs of Pope and also those of Chiabrera, which occasioned this dissertation, are in metre, it may be proper here to enquire how far the notion of a perfect epitaph, as given in a former Paper, may be modified by the choice of metre for the vehicle, in preference to prose. If our opinions be just, it is manifest that the basis must remain the same in either case ; and that the difference can only lie in the superstructure ; and it is equally plain,

that a judicious man will be less disposed in this case than in any other to avail himself of the liberty given by metre to adopt phrases of fancy, or to enter into the more remote regions of illustrative imagery. For the occasion of writing an epitaph is matter-of-fact in its intensity, and forbids more authoritatively than any other species of composition all modes of fiction, except those which the very strength of passion has created; which have been acknowledged by the human heart, and have become so familiar that they are converted into substantial realities. When I come to the epitaphs of Chiabrera, I shall perhaps give instances in which I think he has not written under the impression of this truth; where the poetic imagery does not elevate, deepen, or refine the human passion, which it ought always to do or not to act at all, but excludes it. In a far greater degree are Pope's epitaphs debased by faults into which he could not I think have fallen if he had written in prose as a plain man and not as a metrical Wit. I will transcribe from Pope's Epitaphs the one upon Mrs. Corbet (who died of a cancer), Dr. Johnson having extolled it highly and pronounced it the best of the collection.

> Here rests a woman, good without pretence,
> Blest with plain reason and with sober sense;
> No conquest she but o'er herself desir'd;
> No arts essayed, but not to be admir'd.
> Passion and pride were to her soul unknown,
> Convinc'd that virtue only is our own.
> So unaffected, so compos'd a mind,
> So firm yet soft, so strong yet so refin'd,
> Heaven as its purest gold by tortures tried,
> The saint sustain'd it, but the woman died.

This *may* be the best of Pope's Epitaphs; but if the standard which we have fixed be a just one, it cannot be approved of. First, it must be observed, that in the epitaphs of this Writer, the true impulse is wanting, and that his motions must of necessity be feeble. For he

has no other aim than to give a favourable portrait of the character of the deceased. Now mark the process by which this is performed. Nothing is represented implicitly, that is, with its accompaniment of circumstances, or conveyed by its effects. The Author forgets that it is a living creature that must interest us and not an intellectual existence, which a mere character is. Insensible to this distinction the brain of the Writer is set at work to report as flatteringly as he may of the mind of his subject; the good qualities are separately abstracted (can it be otherwise than coldly and unfeelingly?) and put together again as coldly and unfeelingly. The epitaph now before us owes what exemption it may have from these defects in its general plan to the excruciating disease of which the lady died; but it is liable to the same censure, and is, like the rest, further objectionable in this; namely, that the thoughts have their nature changed and moulded by the vicious expression in which they are entangled, to an excess rendering them wholly unfit for the place they occupy.

> Here rests a woman, good without pretence,
> Blest with plain reason—

from which *sober sense* is not sufficiently distinguishable. This verse and a half, and the one "so unaffected, so composed a mind," are characteristic, and the expression is true to nature; but they are, if I may take the liberty of saying it, the only parts of the epitaph which have this merit. Minute criticism is in its nature irksome, and as commonly practised in books and conversation, is both irksome and injurious. Yet every mind must occasionally be exercised in this discipline, else it cannot learn the art of bringing words rigorously to the test of thoughts; and these again to a comparison with things, their archetypes, contemplated first in themselves, and secondly in relation to each other; in all which processes the mind must be skilful, otherwise it will be perpetually imposed upon. In the next couplet the word *conquest*,

is applied in a manner that would have been displeasing even from its triteness in a copy of complimentary verses to a fashionable Beauty; but to talk of making conquests in an epitaph is not to be endured. "No arts essayed, but not to be admired,"—are words expressing that she had recourse to artifices to conceal her amiable and admirable qualities; and the context implies that there was a merit in this; which surely no sane mind would allow. But the meaning of the Author, simply and honestly given, was nothing more than that she shunned admiration, probably with a more apprehensive modesty than was common; and more than this would have been inconsistent with the praise bestowed upon her—that she had an unaffected mind. This couplet is further objectionable, because the sense of love and peaceful admiration which such a character naturally inspires, is disturbed by an oblique and ill-timed stroke of satire. She is not praised so much as others are blamed, and is degraded by the Author in thus being made a covert or stalking-horse for gratifying a propensity the most abhorrent from her own nature—"Passion and pride were to her soul unknown." It cannot be meant that she had no passions, but that they were moderate and kept in subordination to her reason; but the thought is not here expressed; nor is it clear that a conviction in the understanding that "virtue only is our own," though it might suppress her pride, would be itself competent to govern or abate many other affections and passions to which our frail nature is, and ought in various degrees, to be subject. In fact, the Author appears to have had no precise notion of his own meaning. If she was "good without pretence," it seems unnecessary to say that she was not proud. Dr. Johnson, making an exception of the verse, "Convinced that virtue only is our own," praises this epitaph for "containing nothing taken from common places." Now in fact, as may be deduced from the principles of this discourse, it is not only no fault but a primary requisite in an epitaph that

it shall contain thoughts and feelings which are in their substance common-place, and even trite. It is grounded upon the universal intellectual property of man,—sensations which all men have felt and feel in some degree daily and hourly;—truths whose very interest and importance have caused them to be unattended to, as things which could take care of themselves. But it is required that these truths should be instinctively ejaculated or should rise irresistibly from circumstances; in a word that they should be uttered in such connection as shall make it felt that they are not adopted, not spoken by rote, but perceived in their whole compass with the freshness and clearness of an original intuition. The Writer must introduce the truth with such accompaniment as shall imply that he has mounted to the sources of things, penetrated the dark cavern from which the river that murmurs in every one's ear has flowed from generation to generation. The line "Virtue only is our own," —is objectionable, not from the common-placeness of the truth, but from the vapid manner in which it is conveyed. A similar sentiment is expressed with appropriate dignity in an epitaph by Chiabrera, where he makes the Archbishop of Albino say of himself, that he was

> smitten by the great ones of the world,
> But did not fall; for virtue braves all shocks,
> Upon herself resting immoveably.

"So firm yet soft, so strong yet so refined": These intellectual operations (while they can be conceived of as operations of intellect at all, for in fact one half of the process is mechanical, words doing their own work and one half of the line manufacturing the rest) remind me of the motions of a Posture-master, or of a man balancing a sword upon his finger, which must be kept from falling at all hazards. "The saint sustained it, but the woman died." Let us look steadily at this antithesis: the *saint*, that is her soul strengthened by religion, supported the anguish of her disease with patience and

resignation; but the *woman*, that is her body (for if anything else is meant by the word woman, it contradicts the former part of the proposition and the passage is nonsense), was overcome. Why was not this simply expressed; without playing with the Reader's fancy, to the delusion and dishonour of his understanding, by a trifling epigrammatic point? But alas! ages must pass away before men will have their eyes open to the beauty and majesty of Truth, and will be taught to venerate Poetry no further than as she is a handmaid pure as her mistress—the noblest handmaid in her train!

XII

UPON EPITAPHS (III)

CELEBRATED EPITAPHS CONSIDERED[1]

I VINDICATE the rights and dignity of Nature; and as long as I condemn nothing without assigning reasons not lightly given, I cannot suffer any individual, however highly and deservedly honoured by my countrymen, to stand in my way. If my notions are right, the epitaphs of Pope cannot well be too severely condemned; for not only are they almost wholly destitute of those universal feelings and simple movements of mind which we have called for as indispensable, but they are little better than a tissue of false thoughts, languid and vague expressions, unmeaning antithesis, and laborious attempts at discrimination. Pope's mind had been employed chiefly in observation upon the vices and follies of men. Now, vice and folly are in contradiction with the moral principle which can never be extinguished in the mind; and therefore, wanting the contrast, are irregular, capricious, and inconsistent with themselves. If a man has once said (see *Friend*), "Evil, be thou my good!" and has acted accordingly, however strenuous may have been his adherence to this principle, it will be well known by those who have had an opportunity of observing him narrowly that there have been perpetual obliquities in his course; evil passions thwarting each other in various ways; and now and

[1] I have no means of knowing whether this was Wordsworth's title or not. I do not think it was; but, as already explained, the MS. has disappeared.—ED.

then, revivals of his better nature, which check him for a short time or lead him to remeasure his steps:—not to speak of the various necessities of counterfeiting virtue, which the furtherance of his schemes will impose upon him, and the division which will be consequently introduced into his nature.

It is reasonable then that Cicero, when holding up Catiline to detestation; and (without going to such an extreme case) that Dryden and Pope, when they are describing characters like Buckingham, Shaftsbury, and the Duchess of Marlborough, should represent qualities and actions at war with each other and with themselves; and that the page should be suitably crowded with antithetical expressions. But all this argues an obtuse moral sensibility and a consequent want of knowledge, if applied where virtue ought to be described in the language of affectionate admiration. In the mind of the truly great and good everything that is of importance is at peace with itself; all is stillness, sweetness and stable grandeur. Accordingly the contemplation of virtue is attended with repose. A lovely quality, if its loveliness be clearly perceived, fastens the mind with absolute sovereignty upon itself; permitting or inciting it to pass, by smooth gradation or gentle transition, to some other kindred quality. Thus a perfect image of meekness (I refer to an instance before given) when looked at by a tender mind in its happiest mood, might easily lead on to thoughts of magnanimity; for assuredly there is nothing incongruous in those virtues. But the mind would not then be separated from the person who is the object of its thoughts; it would still be confined to that person or to others of the same general character; that is, would be kept within the circle of qualities which range themselves quietly by each other's sides. Whereas, when meekness and magnanimity are represented antithetically, the mind is not only carried from the main object, but is compelled to turn to a subject in which the quality exists divided from some other as

noble, its natural ally: a painful feeling! that checks the course of love, and repels the sweet thoughts that might be settling round the person whom it was the Author's wish to endear to us; but for whom, after this interruption, we no longer care. If then a man, whose duty it is to praise departed excellence not without some sense of regret or sadness, to do this or to be silent, should upon all occasions exhibit that mode of connecting thoughts, which is only natural while we are delineating vice under certain relations, we may be assured that the nobler sympathies are not alive in him; that he has no clear insight into the internal constitution of virtue; nor has himself been soothed, cheared, harmonised, by those outward effects which follow everywhere her goings,—declaring the presence of the invisible Deity. And though it be true that the most admirable of them must fall far short of perfection, and that the majority of those whose work is commemorated upon their tomb-stones must have been persons in whom good and evil were intermixed in various proportions and stood in various degrees of opposition to each other, yet the Reader will remember what has been said before upon that medium of love, sorrow and admiration, through which a departed friend is viewed; how it softens down or removes these harshnesses and contradictions, which moreover must be supposed never to have been grievous: for there can be no true love but between the good; and no epitaph ought to be written upon a bad man, except for a warning.

The purpose of the remarks given in the last Essay was chiefly to assist the Reader in separating truth and sincerity from falsehood and affectation; presuming that if the unction of a devout heart be wanting everything else is of no avail. It was shewn that a current of just thought and feeling may flow under a surface of illustrative imagery so impure as to produce an effect the opposite of that which was intended. Yet, though this fault may be carried to an intolerable *degree*, the Reader will have gathered that in our estimation it is not *in*

kind the most offensive and injurious. We have contrasted it in its excess with instances where the genuine current or vein was wholly wanting; where the thoughts and feelings had no vital union, but were artificially connected, or formally accumulated, in a manner that would imply discontinuity and feebleness of mind upon any occasion, but still more reprehensible here!

I will proceed to give milder examples not in this last kind but in the former; namely of failure from various causes where the ground-work is good.

> Take holy earth! all that my soul holds dear:
> Take that best gift which Heaven so lately gave:
> To Bristol's fount I bore with trembling care,
> Her faded form. She bow'd to taste the wave—
> And died. Does youth, does beauty read the line?
> Does sympathetic fear their breasts alarm?
> Speak, dead Maria! breathe a strain divine;
> Even from the grave thou shalt have power to charm.
> Bid them in duty's sphere as meekly move:
> And if so fair, from vanity as free,
> As firm in friendship, and as fond in love;
> Tell them, tho' 'tis an awful thing to die,
> ('Twas e'en to thee) yet, the dread path once trod;
> Heaven lifts its everlasting portals high,
> And bids "the pure in heart behold their God."

This epitaph has much of what we have demanded; but it is debased in some instances by weakness of expression, in others by false prettiness. "She bow'd to taste the wave, and died." The plain truth was, she drank the Bristol waters which failed to restore her, and her death soon followed; but the expression involves a multitude of petty occupations for the fancy. "She bow'd": was there any truth in this? "to taste the wave": the water of a mineral spring which must have been drunk out of a goblet. Strange application of the word "wave" and "died": This would have been a just expression if the water had killed her; but, as it is, the tender thought involved in the disappointment of a hope however faint is left unexpressed; and a shock of surprise is given,

entertaining perhaps to a light fancy but to a steady mind unsatisfactory, because false. "Speak! dead Maria, breathe a strain divine"! This sense flows nobly from the heart and the imagination; but perhaps it is not one of those impassioned thoughts which should be fixed in language upon a sepulchral stone. It is in its nature too poignant and transitory. A husband meditating by his wife's grave would throw off such a feeling, and would give voice to it; and it would be in its place in a Monody to her memory; but if I am not mistaken, ought to have been suppressed here, or uttered after a different manner. The implied impersonation of the deceased (according to the tenor of what has before been said) ought to have been more general and shadowy.

> And if so fair, from vanity as free,
> As firm in friendship and as fond in love;
> Tell them——

These are two sweet verses, but the word "fair" is improper; for unquestionably it was not intended that their title to receive this assurance should depend at all upon their personal beauty. Moreover in this couplet and in what follows, the long suspension of the sense excites the expectation of a thought less common than the concluding one; and is an instance of a failure in doing what is most needful and most difficult in an epitaph to do; namely to give to universally received truths a pathos and spirit which shall re-admit them into the soul like revelations of the moment.

I have said that this excellence is difficult to attain; and why? Is it because nature is weak? No! Where the soul has been thoroughly stricken (and Heaven knows the course of life must have placed all men, at some time or other, in that condition) there is never a want of *positive* strength; but because the adversary of Nature (call that adversary Art or by what name you will) is *comparatively* strong. The far-searching influence of the power, which, for want of a better name, we will

denominate Taste, is in nothing more evinced than in the changeful character and complexion of that species of composition which we have been reviewing. Upon a call so urgent, it might be expected that the affections, the memory, and the imagination would be *constrained* to speak their genuine language. Yet, if the few specimens which have been given in the course of this enquiry, do not demonstrate the fact, the Reader need only look into any collection of Epitaphs to be convinced, that the faults predominant in the literature of every age will be as strongly reflected in the sepulchral inscriptions as any where; nay perhaps more so, from the anxiety of the Author to do justice to the occasion: and especially if the composition be in verse; for then it comes more avowedly in the shape of a work of art; and of course, is more likely to be coloured by the work of art holden in most esteem at the time. In a bulky volume of Poetry entitled ELEGANT EXTRACTS IN VERSE, which must be known to most of my Readers, as it is circulated everywhere and in fact constitutes at this day the poetical library of our Schools, I find a number of epitaphs in verse, of the last century; and there is scarcely one which is not thoroughly tainted by the artifices which have over-run our writings in metre since the days of Dryden and Pope. Energy, stillness, grandeur, tenderness, those feelings which are the pure emanations of Nature, those thoughts which have the infinitude of truth, and those expressions which are not what the garb is to the body but what the body is to the soul, themselves a constituent part and power or function in the thought—all these are abandoned for their opposites,—as if our countrymen, through successive generations, had lost the sense of solemnity and pensiveness (not to speak of deeper emotions) and resorted to the tombs of their forefathers and contemporaries, only to be tickled and surprised. Would we not recoil from such gratification, in such a place, if the general literature of the country had not co-operated with other causes insidiously to

weaken our sensibilities and deprave our judgments? Doubtless, there are shocks of event and circumstance, public and private, by which for all minds the truths of Nature will be elicited; but sorrow for that individual or people to whom these special interferences are necessary, to bring them into communion with the inner spirit of things! for such intercourse must be profitless in proportion as it is unfrequently irregular and transient. Words are too awful an instrument for good and evil, to be trifled with; they hold above all other external powers a dominion over thoughts. If words be not (recurring to a metaphor before used) an incarnation of the thought, but only a clothing for it, then surely will they prove an ill gift; such a one as those possessed vestments, read of in the stories of superstitious times, which had power to consume and to alienate from his right mind the victim who put them on. Language, if it do not uphold, and feed, and leave in quiet, like the power of gravitation or the air we breathe, is a counter-spirit, unremittingly and noiselessly at work, to subvert, to lay waste, to vitiate, and to dissolve. From a deep conviction then that the excellence of writing, whether in prose or verse, consists in a conjunction of Reason and Passion, a conjunction which must be of necessity benign; and that it might be deduced from what has been said that the taste, intellectual power and morals of a country are inseparably linked in mutual dependence, I have dwelt thus long upon this argument. And the occasion justifies me; for how could the tyranny of bad taste be brought home to the mind more aptly than by showing in what degree the feelings of nature yield to it when we are rendering to our friends the solemn testimony of our love? more forcibly than by giving proof that thoughts cannot, even upon this impulse, assume an outward life without a transmutation and a fall.

Epitaph on Miss Drummond in the Church of Broadsworth, Yorkshire.

MASON.

Here sleeps what once was beauty, once was grace ;
Grace, that with tenderness and sense combin'd
To form that harmony of soul and face,
Where beauty shines, the mirror of the mind.
Such was the maid, that in the morn of youth,
In virgin innocence, in Nature's pride,
Blest with each art, that owes its charm to truth,
Sunk in her Father's fond embrace, and died.
He weeps : O venerate the holy tear !
Faith lends her aid to ease Affliction's load ;
The parent mourns his child upon the bier,
The Christian yields an angel to his God.

The following is a translation from the Latin, communicated to a Lady in her childhood and by her preserved in memory. I regret that I have not seen the original.

She is gone—my beloved daughter Eliza is gone,
Fair, cheerful, benign, my child is gone.
Thee long to be regretted a Father mourns,
Regretted—but thanks to the most perfect God ! not lost.
For a happier age approaches
When again, my child, I shall behold
And live with thee for ever.

Matthew Dobson to his dear, engaging, happy Eliza
Who in the 18th year of her age
Passed peaceably into heaven.

The former of these epitaphs is very far from being the worst of its kind, and on that account I have placed the two in contrast. Unquestionably, as the Father in the latter speaks in his own person, the situation is much more pathetic ; but, making due allowance for this advantage, who does not here feel a superior truth and sanctity, which is not dependent upon this circumstance but merely the result of the expression and the connection of the thoughts ? I am not so fortunate as to have

any knowledge of the Author of this affecting composition, but I much fear if he had called in the assistance of English verse the better to convey his thoughts, such sacrifices would, from various influences, have been made *even by him*, that, though he might have excited admiration in thousands, he would have truly moved no one. The latter part of the following by Gray is almost the only instance among the metrical epitaphs in our language of the last century, which I remember, of affecting thoughts rising naturally and keeping themselves pure from vicious diction; and therefore retaining their appropriate power over the mind.

Epitaph on Mrs. Clark.[1]

Lo! where the silent marble weeps,
A friend, a wife, a mother, sleeps;
A heart, within whose sacred cell
The peaceful virtues lov'd to dwell.
Affection warm, and love sincere,
And soft humanity were there.
In agony, in death resigned,
She felt the wound she left behind.
Her infant image, here below,
Sits smiling on a father's woe;
Whom what awaits, while yet he strays
Along the lonely vale of days?
A pang to secret sorrow dear;
A sigh, an unavailing tear,
Till time shall every grief remove,
With life, with meaning, and with love.

I have been speaking of faults which are aggravated by temptations thrown in the way of modern Writers when they compose in metre. The first six lines of this epitaph are vague and languid, more so than I think would have been possible had it been written in prose. Yet Gray, who was so happy in the remaining part, especially the last four lines, has grievously failed *in*

[1] Gray's title is *Epitaph on Mrs. Jane Clerke.* She was the wife of Dr. John Clerke of Epsom.—ED.

prose upon a subject which it might have been expected would have bound him indissolubly to the propriety of Nature and comprehensive reason. I allude to the conclusion of the epitaph upon his mother, where he says, "she was the careful tender mother of many children, one of whom alone had the misfortune to survive her." This is a searching thought, but wholly out of place. Had it been said of an idiot, of a palsied child, or of an adult from any cause dependent upon his mother to a degree of helplessness which nothing but maternal tenderness and watchfulness could answer, that he had the misfortune to survive his mother, the thought would have been just. The same might also have been wrung from any man (thinking of himself) when his soul was smitten with compunction or remorse, through the consciousness of a misdeed from which he might have been preserved (as he hopes or believes) by his mother's prudence, by her anxious care if longer continued, or by the reverential fear of offending or disobeying her. But even then (unless accompanied with a detail of extraordinary circumstances), if transferred to her monument, it would have been misplaced, as being too peculiar, and for reasons which have been before alleged, namely, as too transitory and poignant. But in an ordinary case, for a man permanently and conspicuously to record that this was his fixed feeling; what is it but to run counter to the course of nature, which has made it matter of expectation and congratulation that parents should die before their children? What is it, if searched to the bottom, but lurking and sickly selfishness? Does not the regret include a wish that the mother should have survived all her offspring, have witnessed that bitter desolation where the order of things is disturbed and inverted? And finally, does it not withdraw the attention of the Reader from the subject to the Author of the Memorial, as one to be commiserated for his strangely unhappy condition, or to be condemned for the morbid constitution of his feelings,

or for his deficiency in judgment? A fault of the same kind, though less in degree, is found in the epitaph of Pope upon Harcourt; of whom it is said that "he never gave his father grief but when he died." I need not point out how many situations there are in which such an expression of feeling would be natural and becoming; but in a permanent inscription things only should be admitted that have an enduring place in the mind; and a nice selection is required even among these. The Duke of Ormond said of his son Ossory, "that he preferred his dead son to any living son in Christendom,"—a thought which (to adopt an expression used before) has the infinitude of truth! But though in this there is no momentary illusion, nothing fugitive, it would still have been unbecoming, had it been placed in open view over the son's grave; inasmuch as such expression of it would have had an ostentatious air, and would have implied a disparagement of others. The sublimity of the sentiment consists in its being the secret possession of the Father.

Having been engaged so long in the ungracious office of sitting in judgment where I have found so much more to censure than to approve, though, wherever it was in my power, I have placed good by the side of evil, that the Reader might intuitively receive the truths which I wished to communicate, I now turn back with pleasure to Chiabrera; of whose productions in this department the Reader of *The Friend* may be enabled to form a judgment who has attentively perused the few specimens only which have been given. "An epitaph," says Weever, "is a superscription (either in verse or prose) or an astrict pithic diagram, writ, carved, or engraven upon the tomb, grave, or sepulchre of the defunct, briefly declaring (*and that with a kind of commiseration*) the name, the age, the deserts, the dignities, the state, *the praises both of body and minde*, the good and bad fortunes in the life, and the manner and time of the death of the person therein interred." This account of an epitaph, which as far as it goes is just, was no doubt

taken by Weever from the monuments of our own country, and it shews that in his conception an epitaph was not to be an abstract character of the deceased but an epitomised biography blended with description by which an impression of the character was to be conveyed. Bring forward the one incidental expression, a kind of commiseration, unite with it a concern on the part of the dead for the well-being of the living made known by exhortation and admonition, and let this commiseration and concern pervade and brood over the whole, so that what was peculiar to the individual shall still be subordinate to a sense of what he had in common with the species, our notion of a perfect epitaph would then be realised; and it pleases me to say that this is the very model upon which those of Chiabrera are for the most part framed. Observe how exquisitely this is exemplified in the one beginning "Pause, courteous stranger! Balbi supplicates," given in *The Friend* some weeks ago.[1] The subject of the epitaph is introduced intreating, not directly in his own person but through the mouth of the author, that according to the religious belief of his country a prayer for his soul might be preferred to the Redeemer of the world: placed in counterpoise with this right which he has in common with all the dead, his individual earthly accomplishments appear light to his funeral Biographer as they did to the person of whom he speaks when alive, nor could Chiabrera have ventured to touch upon them but under the sanction of this person's acknowledgment. He then goes on to say how various and profound was his learning, and how deep a hold it took upon his affections, but that he weaned himself from these things as vanities, and was devoted in later life exclusively to the divine truths of the Gospel as the only knowledge in which he could find perfect rest. Here we are thrown back upon the introductory supplication and made to feel its especial

[1] January 4, 1810.—Ed.

propriety in this case ; his life was long, and every part of it bore appropriate fruits. Urbina his birth-place might be proud of him, and the passenger who was entreated to pray for his soul has a wish breathed for his welfare. This composition is a perfect whole, there is nothing arbitrary or mechanical, but it is an organised body, of which the members are bound together by a common life and are all justly proportioned. If I had not gone so much into detail I should have given further instances of Chiabrera's Epitaphs, but I must content myself with saying that if he had abstained from the introduction of heathen mythology, of which he is lavish —an inexcusable fault for an inhabitant of a Christian country, yet admitting of some palliation in an Italian who treads classic soil and has before his eyes the ruins of the temples which were dedicated to those fictitious beings of objects of worship by the majestic people his ancestors—had omitted also some uncharacteristic particulars, and had not on some occasions forgotten that truth is the soul of passion, he would have left his Readers little to regret. I do not mean to say that higher and nobler thoughts may not be found in sepulchral inscriptions than his contain ; but he understood his work, the principles upon which he composed are just. The Reader of *The Friend* has had proofs of this : one shall be given of his mixed manner, exemplifying some of the points in which he has erred.

O Lelius beauteous flower of gentleness,
The fair Anglaia's friend above all friends :
O darling of the fascinating Loves
By what dire envy moved did Death uproot
Thy days ere yet full blown, and what ill chance
Hath robbed Savona of her noblest grace ?
She weeps for thee and shall forever weep,
And if the fountain of her tears should fail
She would implore Sabete to supply
Her need : Sabete, sympathising stream,
Who on his margin saw thee close thine eyes
On the chaste bosom of thy Lady dear,

Ah, what do riches, what does youth avail?
Dust are our hopes, I weeping did inscribe
In bitterness thy monument, and pray
Of every gentle spirit bitterly
To read the record with as copious tears.

This epitaph is not without some tender thoughts, but a comparison of it with the one upon the youthful Pozzobonelli (see *Friend*),[1] will more clearly shew that Chiabrera has here neglected to ascertain whether the passions expressed were in kind and degree a dispensation of reason, or at least commodities issued under her licence and authority.

The epitaphs of Chiabrera [2] are twenty-nine in number, all of them save two probably little known at this day in their own country and scarcely at all beyond the limits of it; and the Reader is generally made acquainted with the moral and intellectual excellence which distinguished them by a brief history of the course of their lives or a selection of events and circumstances, and thus they are individualised; but in the two other instances, namely those of Tasso and Raphael, he enters into no particulars, but contents himself with four lines expressing one sentiment upon the principle laid down in the former part of this discourse, where the subject of an epitaph is a man of prime note.

Torquato Tasso rests within this tomb:
This figure weeping from her inmost heart
Is Poesy: from such impassioned grief
Let every one conclude what this man was.

The epitaph which Chiabrera composed for himself has also an appropriate brevity and is distinguished for its grandeur, the sentiment being the same as that which the Reader has before seen so happily enlarged upon.

As I am brought back to men of first rate distinction and public benefactors, I cannot resist the pleasure

[1] January 4, 1810.—Ed.

[2] See, in the "Poetical Works" (vol. iv. pp. 230-239), Wordsworth's translations from the *Epitaphs of Chiabrera*.—Ed.

of transcribing the metrical part of an epitaph which formerly was inscribed in the church of St. Paul's to that Bishop of London who prevailed with William the Conqueror to secure to the inhabitants of the city all the liberties and privileges which they had enjoyed in the time of Edward the Confessor.

These marble monuments to thee thy citizens assigne,
Rewards (O Father) farre unfit to those deserts of thine:
Thee unto them a faithful friend, thy London people found,
And to this towne of no small weight, a stay both sure and sound.
Their liberties restorde to them, by means of thee have beene,
Their publicke weale by means of thee, large gifts have felt and seene:
Thy riches, stocke, and beauty brave, one hour hath them suppresst,
Yet these thy virtues and good deeds with us for ever rest.

Thus have I attempted to determine what a sepulchral inscription ought to be, and taken at the same time a survey of what epitaphs are good and bad, and have shewn to what deficiencies in sensibility and to what errors in taste and judgment most commonly are to be ascribed. It was my intention to have given a few specimens from those of the ancients; but I have already I fear taken up too much of the Reader's time. I have not animadverted upon such, alas! far too numerous, as are reprehensible from the want of moral rectitude in those who have composed them or given it to be understood that they should be so composed; boastful and haughty panegyrics ludicrously contradicting the solid remembrance of those who knew the deceased; shocking the common sense of mankind by their extravagance, and affronting the very altar with their impious falsehood. Those I leave to general scorn, not however without a general recommendation that they who have offended or may be disposed to offend in this manner, would take into serious thought the heinousness of their transgression.

Upon reviewing what has been written I think it better here to add a few favourable specimens such as are ordinarily found in our country church-yards at this day. If those primary sensations upon which I have dwelt so much be not stifled in the heart of the Reader, they will be read with pleasure, otherwise neither these nor more exalted strains can by him be truly interpreted.

Aged 87 *and* 83.

Not more with silver hairs than virtue crown'd
The good old pair take up this spot of ground :
Tread in their steps and you will surely find
Their Rest above, below their peace of mind.

At the Last Day I'm sure I shall appear,
To meet with Jesus Christ my Saviour dear :
Where I do hope to live with Him in bliss.
Oh, what a joy at my last hour was this !

Aged 3 *Months.*

What Christ said once He said to all,
Come unto Me, ye children small :
None shall do you any wrong,
For to My Kingdom you belong.

Aged 10 *Weeks.*

The Babe was sucking at the breast
When God did call him to his rest.

In an obscure corner of a country church-yard I once espied, half overgrown with hemlock and nettles, a very small stone laid upon the ground, bearing nothing more than the name of the deceased with the date of birth and death, importing that it was an infant which had been born one day and died the following. I know not how far the Reader may be in sympathy with me ; but more awful thoughts of rights conferred, of hopes awakened, of remembrances stealing away or vanishing,

were imparted to my mind by that inscription there before my eyes than by any other that it has ever been my lot to meet with upon a tomb-stone.

The most numerous class of sepulchral inscriptions do indeed record nothing else but the name of the buried person; but that he was born upon one day and died upon another. Addison in the *Spectator* making this observation says, "that he cannot look upon those registers of existence, whether of brass or marble, but as a kind of satire upon the departed persons who had left no other memorial of them than that they were born and that they died." In certain moods of mind this is a natural reflection; yet not perhaps the most salutary which the appearance might give birth to. As in these registers the name is mostly associated with others of the same family, this is a prolonged companionship, however shadowy: even a tomb like this is a shrine to which the fancies of a scattered family may return in pilgrimage; the thoughts of the individuals without any communication with each other must oftentimes meet here. Such a frail memorial then is not without its tendency to keep families together. It feeds also local attachment, which is the tap-root of the tree of Patriotism.

I know not how I can withdraw more satisfactorily from this long disquisition than by offering to the Reader as a farewell memorial the following Verses, suggested to me by a concise epitaph which I met with some time ago in one of the most retired vales among the mountains of Westmoreland. There is nothing in the detail of the poem which is not either founded upon the epitaph or gathered from enquiries concerning the deceased, made in the neighbourhood.

Beneath that pine which rears its dusky head
Aloft, and covered by a plain blue stone
Briefly inscribed, a gentle Dalesman lies;
From whom in early childhood was withdrawn
The precious gift of hearing. He grew up
From year to year in loneliness of soul;

And this deep mountain valley was to him
Soundless with all its streams. The bird of dawn
Did never rouse this Cottager from sleep
With startling summons ; not for his delight
The vernal cuckoo shouted, not for him
Murmured the labouring bee. When stormy winds
Were working the broad bosom of the Lake
Into a thousand thousand sparkling waves,
Rocking the trees, or driving cloud on cloud
Along the sharp edge of yon lofty crags,
The agitated scene before his eye
Was silent as a picture ; evermore
Were all things silent wheresoe'er he moved.
Yet by the solace of his own calm thoughts
Upheld, he duteously pursued the round
Of rural labours : the steep mountain side
Ascended with his staff and faithful dog ;
The plough he guided, and the scythe he swayed,
And the ripe corn before his sickle fell
Among the jocund reapers. For himself,
All watchful and industrious as he was,
He wrought not ; neither field nor flock he owned ;
No wish for wealth had place within his mind,
No husband's love nor father's hope or care ;
Though born a younger brother, need was none
That from the floor of his paternal home
He should depart to plant himself anew ;
And when mature in manhood he beheld
His parents laid in earth, no loss ensued
Of rights to him, but he remained well pleased
By the pure bond of independent love,
An inmate of a second family,
The fellow-labourer and friend of him
To whom the small inheritance had fallen.
Nor deem that his mild presence was a weight
That pressed upon his brother's house ; for books
Were ready comrades whom he could not tire ;
Of whose society the blameless man
Was never satiate ; their familiar voice
Even to old age with unabated charm
Beguiled his leisure hours, refreshed his thoughts,
Beyond its natural elevation raised
His introverted spirit, and bestowed

Upon his life an outward dignity
Which all acknowledged. The dark winter night,
The stormy day had each its own resource ;
Song of the Muses, sage historic tale,
Science severe, or word of Holy Writ
Announcing immortality and joy
To the assembled spirits of the just
From imperfection and decay secure :
Thus soothed at home, thus busy in the field,
To no perverse suspicion he gave way ;
No languor, peevishness, nor vain complaint.
And they who were about him did not fail
In reverence or in courtesy ; they prized
His gentle manners, and his peaceful smiles ;
The gleams of his slow-varying countenance
Were met with answering sympathy and love.
At length when sixty years and five were told
A slow disease insensibly consumed
The powers of nature, and a few short steps
Of friends and kindred bore him from his home,
Yon cottage shaded by the woody crags,
To the profounder stillness of the grave.
Nor was his funeral denied the grace
Of many tears, virtuous and thoughtful grief,
Heart-sorrow rendered sweet by gratitude ;
And now that monumental stone preserves
His name, and unambitiously relates
How long and by what kindly outward aids,
And in what pure contentedness of mind,
The sad privation was by him endured.
And yon tall pine-tree, whose composing sound
Was wasted on the good man's living ear,
Hath now its own peculiar sanctity,
And at the touch of every wandering breeze
Murmurs not idly o'er his peaceful grave.[1]

[1] See *The Excursion*, book vii. ll. 400, etc.—ED.

XIII

PREFACE TO *THE EXCURSION*

1814

PREFACE TO *THE EXCURSION*[1]

THE Title-page announces that this is only a portion of a poem; and the Reader must be here apprised that it belongs to the second part of a long and laborious Work, which is to consist of three parts.—The Author will candidly acknowledge that, if the first of these had been completed, and in such a manner as to satisfy his own mind, he should have preferred the natural order of publication, and have given that to the world first; but, as the second division of the Work was designed to refer more to passing events, and to an existing state of things, than the others were meant to do, more continuous exertion was naturally bestowed upon it, and greater progress made here than in the rest of the poem; and as this part does not depend upon the preceding, to a degree which will materially injure its own peculiar interest, the Author, complying with the earnest entreaties of some valued Friends, presents the following pages to the Public.

It may be proper to state whence the poem, of which *The Excursion* is a part, derives its Title of THE RECLUSE.—Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own

[1] Although this Preface has already appeared in Volume V. of the "Poetical Works," it is also entitled to a place amongst the "Prose Works" of Wordsworth.—ED.

mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work, addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's Intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled, *The Recluse;* as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement.—The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself: and the two Works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the ante-chapel has to the body of a gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.

The Author would not have deemed himself justified in saying, upon this occasion, so much of performances either unfinished, or unpublished, if he had not thought that the labour bestowed by him upon what he has heretofore and now laid before the Public entitled him to candid attention for such a statement as he thinks necessary to throw light upon his endeavours to please and, he would hope, to benefit his countrymen.—Nothing further need be added, than that the first and third parts of *The Recluse* will consist chiefly of meditations in the Author's own person; and that in the intermediate part

(*The Excursion*) the intervention of characters speaking is employed, and something of a dramatic form adopted.

It is not the Author's intention formally to announce a system: it was more animating to him to proceed in a different course; and if he shall succeed in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings, the Reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself. And in the mean time the following passage, taken from the conclusion of the first book of *The Recluse*, may be acceptable as a kind of *Prospectus* of the design and scope of the whole Poem.

> On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
> Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
> Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
> Accompanied by feelings of delight
> Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;
> And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
> And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
> Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
> The good and evil of our mortal state.
> —To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come,
> Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
> Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself—
> I would give utterance in numerous verse.
> Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,
> And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
> Of blessed consolations in distress;
> Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;
> Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
> Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
> Inviolate retirement, subject there
> To Conscience only, and the law supreme
> Of that Intelligence which governs all—
> I sing:—"fit audience let me find though few!"
>
> So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard—
> In holiest mood. Urania, I shall need
> Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
> Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven!
> For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink

Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form—
Jehovah—with His thunder, and the choir
Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones—
I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man—
My haunt, and the main region of my song.
—Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,
Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
From earth's materials—waits upon my steps;
Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main—why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.
—I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
Of this great consummation:—and, by words
Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external World
Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too—
Theme this but little heard of among men—
The external World is fitted to the Mind;
And the creation (by no lower name
Can it be called) which they with blended might
Accomplish:—this is our high argument.

—Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I oft
Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
Of madding passions mutually inflamed;
Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities—may these sounds
Have their authentic comment; that even these
Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn!—
Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspir'st
The human Soul of universal earth,
Dreaming on things to come; and dost possess
A metropolitan temple in the hearts
Of mighty Poets: upon me bestow
A gift of genuine insight; that my Song
With star-like virtue in its place may shine,
Shedding benignant influence, and secure,
Itself, from all malevolent effect
Of those mutations that extend their sway
Throughout the nether sphere!—And if with this
I mix more lowly matter: with the thing
Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
Contemplating: and who, and what he was—
The transitory Being that beheld
This Vision: when and where, and how he lived;
Be not this labour useless. If such theme
May sort with highest objects, then—dread Power!
Whose gracious favour is the primal source
Of all illumination—may my Life
Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires, and simpler manners;—nurse
My Heart in genuine freedom:—all pure thoughts
Be with me;—so shall Thy unfailing love
Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!

XIV

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF THE POEMS (1815) WITH DEDICATION TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1815, WITH DEDICATION TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT[1]

DEDICATION

To Sir George Howland Beaumont, Bart.

My dear Sir George,

Accept my thanks for the permission given me to dedicate these Volumes to you. In addition to a lively pleasure derived from general considerations, I feel a particular satisfaction; for, by inscribing these Poems with your Name, I seem to myself in some degree to repay, by an appropriate honour, the great obligation which I owe to one part of the Collection—as having been the means of first making us personally known to each other. Upon much of the remainder, also, you have a peculiar claim,—for some of the best pieces were composed under the shade of your own groves, upon the classic ground of Coleorton; where I was animated by the recollection of those illustrious Poets of your name and family, who were born in that neighbourhood; and, we may be assured, did not wander with indifference by the dashing stream of Grace Dieu, and among the rocks

[1] Of the Preface to the edition of the Poems in 1815, Charles Lamb wrote to Wordsworth: "The Preface is noble, and such as you should write. I wish I could set my name to it, *Imprimatur*, but you have set it there yourself, and I thank you. I would rather be a doorkeeper in your margin, than have their proudest text swelling with my eulogies." (See *The Letters of Charles Lamb*, edited by Alfred Ainger, vol. i, p. 283.)—Ed.

that diversify the forest of Charnwood.—Nor is there, any one to whom such parts of this Collection as have been inspired or coloured by the beautiful Country from which I now address you, could be presented with more propriety than to yourself—to whom it has suggested so many admirable pictures. Early in life, the sublimity and beauty of this region excited your admiration; and I know that you are bound to it in mind by a still strengthening attachment.

Wishing and hoping that this Work, with the embellishments it has received from your pencil, may survive as a lasting memorial of a friendship which I reckon among the blessings of my life,

I have the honour to be, my dear Sir George,
Yours most affectionately and faithfully,
William Wordsworth.

Rydal Mount, Westmoreland,
February 1, 1815.

PREFACE

The observations prefixed to that portion of these Volumes which was published many years ago, under the title of *Lyrical Ballads*, have so little of a special application to the greater part of the present enlarged and diversified collection, that they could not with propriety stand as an Introduction to it. Not deeming it, however, expedient to suppress that exposition, slight and imperfect as it is, of the feelings which had determined the choice of the subjects, and the principles which had regulated the composition of those Pieces, I have placed it so as to form an Essay supplementary to the Preface, to be attended to, or not, at the pleasure of the reader.

In the preface to that part of *The Recluse*, lately published under the title of *The Excursion*, I have alluded to a meditated arrangement of my minor Poems, which should assist the attentive reader in perceiving their connection with each other, and also their subor-

dination to that work. I shall here say a few words explanatory of this arrangement, as carried into effect in the present Volumes.

The powers requisite for the production of poetry are, first, those of Observation and Description; *i.e.* the ability to observe with accuracy things as they are in themselves, and with fidelity to describe them, unmodified by any passion or feeling existing in the mind of the describer; whether the things depicted be actually present to the senses, or have a place only in the memory. This power, although indispensable to a Poet, is one which he employs only in submission to necessity, and never for a continuance of time: as its exercise supposes all the higher qualities of the mind to be passive, and in a state of subjection to external objects, much in the same way as a translator or engraver ought to be to his original. 2ndly, Sensibility,—which, the more exquisite it is, the wider will be the range of a Poet's perceptions; and the more will he be incited to observe objects, both as they exist in themselves and as re-acted upon by his own mind. (The distinction between poetic and human sensibility has been marked in the character of the Poet delineated in the original preface before mentioned.) 3rdly, Reflection,—which makes the Poet acquainted with the value of actions, images, thoughts, and feelings; and assists the sensibility in perceiving their connection with each other. 4thly, Imagination and Fancy,—to modify, to create, and to associate. 5thly, Invention,—by which characters are composed out of materials supplied by observation; whether of the Poet's own heart and mind, or of external life and nature; and such incidents and situations produced as are most impressive to the imagination, and most fitted to do justice to the characters, sentiments, and passions, which the poet undertakes to illustrate. And, lastly, Judgment, —to decide how and where, and in what degree, each of these faculties ought to be exerted; so that the less shall not be sacrificed to the greater, nor the greater,

slighting the less, arrogate, to its own injury, more than its due. By judgment, also, is determined what are the laws and appropriate graces of every species of composition.[1]

The materials of Poetry, by these powers collected and produced, are cast, by means of various moulds, into divers forms. The moulds may be enumerated, and the forms specified, in the following order. 1st, the Narrative,—including the Epopœia, the Historic Poem, the Tale, the Romance, the Mock heroic, and, if the spirit of Homer will tolerate such neighbourhood, that dear production of our days, the metrical Novel. Of this class, the distinguishing mark is, that the Narrator, however liberally his speaking agents be introduced, is himself the source from which everything primarily flows. Epic poets, in order that their mode of composition may accord with the elevation of their subject, represent themselves as *singing* from the inspiration of the Muse, "Arma virumque *cano*"; but this is a fiction, in modern times, of slight value: the *Iliad* or the *Paradise Lost* would gain little in our estimation by being chanted. The other poets who belong to this class are commonly content to *tell* their tale;—so that of the whole it may be affirmed that they neither require nor reject the accompaniment of music.

2ndly, The Dramatic,—consisting of Tragedy, Historic Drama, Comedy, and Masque, in which the Poet does not appear at all in his own person, and where the whole action is carried on by speech and dialogue of the agents; music being admitted only incidentally and rarely. The Opera may be placed here, inasmuch as it proceeds by dialogue; though, depending, to the degree that it does, upon music, it has a strong claim to be ranked with the Lyrical. The characteristic and impassioned

[1] "As sensibility to harmony of numbers, and the power of producing it, are invariably attendants upon the faculties above specified, nothing has been said upon these requisites" (in editions 1836 to 1845).—Ed.

Epistle, of which Ovid and Pope have given examples, considered as a species of a monodrama, may, without impropriety, be placed in this class.

3rdly, The Lyrical,—containing the Hymn, the Ode, the Elegy, the Song, and the Ballad; in all which, for the production of their *full* effect, an accompaniment of music is indispensable.

4thly, The Idyllium,—descriptive chiefly either of the processes and appearances of external nature, as *The Seasons* of Thomson; or of characters, manners, and sentiments, as are Shenstone's *Schoolmistress*, *The Cotter's Saturday Night* of Burns, *The Twa Dogs* of the same author; or of these in conjunction with the appearances of Nature, as most of the pieces of Theocritus, the *Allegro* and *Penseroso* of Milton, Beattie's *Minstrel*, Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*. The Epitaph, the Inscription, the Sonnet, most of the Epistles of poets writing in their own persons, and all loco-descriptive poetry, belong to this class.

5thly, Didactic,—the principal object of which is direct instruction; as the poem of Lucretius, *The Georgics* of Virgil, *The Fleece* of Dyer, Mason's *English Garden*, etc.

And, lastly, philosophical Satire, like that of Horace and Juvenal: personal and occasional Satire rarely comprehending sufficient of the general in the individual to be dignified with the name of poetry.

Out of the three last has been constructed a composite order, of which Young's *Night Thoughts*, and Cowper's *Task*, are excellent examples.

It is deducible from the above, that Poems, apparently miscellaneous, may, with propriety, be arranged either with reference to the powers of mind *predominant* in the production of them; or to the mould in which they are cast; or, lastly, to the subjects to which they relate. From each of these considerations, the following Poems have been divided into classes; which, that the work may more obviously correspond with the course of

human life, and for the sake of exhibiting in it the three requisites of a legitimate whole, a beginning, a middle, and an end, have been also arranged, as far as it was possible, according to an order of time, commencing with Childhood, and terminating with Old Age, Death, and Immortality. My guiding wish was, that the small pieces thus discriminated, might be regarded under a two-fold view; as composing an entire work within themselves, and as adjuncts to the philosophical Poem, *The Recluse*. This arrangement has long presented itself habitually to my own mind. Nevertheless, I should have preferred to scatter the contents of these volumes at random, if I had been persuaded that, by the plan adopted, anything material would be taken from the natural effect of the pieces, individually, on the mind of the unreflecting reader. I trust there is a sufficient variety in each class to prevent this, while for him who reads with reflection, the arrangement will serve as a commentary unostentatiously directing his attention to my purposes, both particular and general. But, as I wish to guard against the possibility of misleading by this classification, it is proper first to remind the reader, that certain poems are placed according to the powers of mind, in the Author's conception, predominant in the production of them; *predominant*, which implies the exertion of other faculties in less degree. Where there is more imagination than fancy in a poem, it is placed under the head of imagination, and *vice versâ*. Both of the above classes might without impropriety have been enlarged from that consisting of "Poems Founded on the Affections"; as might this latter from those, and from the class "Proceeding from Sentiment and Reflection." The most striking characteristics of each piece, mutual illustration, variety, and proportion, have governed me throughout.

It may be proper in this place to state, that the extracts in the second class, entitled "Juvenile Pieces," are in many places altered from the printed copy, chiefly

by omission and compression. The slight alterations of another kind were for the most part made not long after the publication of the Poems from which the extracts are taken.[1] These extracts seem to have a title to be placed here, as they were the productions of youth, and represent implicitly some of the features of a youthful mind, at a time when images of nature supplied to it the place of thought, sentiment, and almost of action; or, as it will be found expressed, of a state of mind when

> the sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
> The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
> Their colours and their forms, were then to me
> An appetite, a feeling, and a love,
> That had no need of a remoter charm,
> By thought supplied, or any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye.[2]

I will own that I was much at a loss what to select of these descriptions: and perhaps it would have been better either to have reprinted the whole, or suppressed what I have given.[3]

None of the other classes, except those of Fancy and Imagination, require any particular notice. But a remark of general application may be made. All Poets, except the dramatic, have been in the practice of feigning that their works were composed to the music of the harp or lyre: with what degree of affectation this has been done in modern times, I leave to the judicious to determine. For my own part, I have not been disposed to violate probability so far, or to make such a large demand upon the reader's charity. Some of these pieces are essentially lyrical; and, therefore, cannot have their

[1] These poems are now printed entire (edition 1820 and onwards).—W. W.

[2] See, in the "Poetical Works," vol. ii. p. 51, *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*, etc., ll. 76-83.—Ed.

[3] The preceding paragraph was omitted in the edition of 1845. —Ed.

due force without a supposed musical accompaniment; but, in much the greatest part, as a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp, I require nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject. Poems, however humble in their kind, if they be good in that kind, cannot read themselves; the law of long syllable and short must not be so inflexible, —the letter of metre must not be so impassive to the spirit of versification,—as to deprive the reader of a voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, the music of the poem;—in the same manner as his mind is left at liberty, and even summoned, to act upon its thoughts and images. But, though the accompaniment of a musical instrument be frequently dispensed with, the true Poet does not therefore abandon his privilege distinct from that of the mere Proseman—

> He murmurs near the running brooks
> A music sweeter than their own.[1]

I come now to the consideration of the words Fancy and Imagination, as employed in the classification of the following Poems. "A man," says an intelligent author, "has imagination in proportion as he can distinctly copy in idea the impressions of sense: it is the faculty which *images* within the mind the phenomena of sensation. A man has fancy in proportion as he can call up, connect, or associate, at pleasure, those internal images (*φαντάζειν* is to cause to appear) so as to complete ideal representations of absent objects. Imagination is the power of depicting, and fancy of evoking and combining. The imagination is formed by patient observation; the fancy by a voluntary activity in shifting the scenery of the mind. The more accurate the imagination, the more safely may a painter, or a poet, undertake a delineation, or a description, without the presence of the objects to be characterised. The more versatile the

[1] See the "Poetical Works," vol. ii. p. 77, *A Poet's Epitaph*, ll. 39, 40.—Ed.

fancy, the more original and striking will be the decorations produced."—*British Synonyms discriminated*, by W. Taylor.

Is not this as if a man should undertake to supply an account of a building, and be so intent upon what he had discovered of the foundation as to conclude his task without once looking up at the superstructure? Here, as in other instances, throughout the volume, the judicious Author's mind is enthralled by Etymology; he takes up the original word as his guide and escort, and too often does not perceive how soon he becomes its prisoner, without liberty to tread in any path but that to which it confines him. It is not easy to find out how imagination, thus explained, differs from distinct remembrance of images; or fancy from quick and vivid recollection of them: each is nothing more than a mode of memory. If the two words bear the above meaning, and no other, what term is left to designate that faculty of which the Poet is "all compact"; he whose eye glances from earth to heaven, whose spiritual attributes body forth what his pen is prompt in turning to shape; or what is left to characterise Fancy, as insinuating herself into the heart of objects with creative activity? Imagination, in the sense of the word as giving title to a class of the following Poems, has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects, and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws. I proceed to illustrate my meaning by instances. A parrot *hangs* from the wires of his cage by his beak or by his claws; or a monkey from the bough of a tree by his paws or his tail. Each creature does so literally and actually. In the first Eclogue of Virgil, the shepherd thinking of the time when he is to take leave of his farm, thus addresses his goats:—

> Non ego vos posthac viridi projectus in antro
> Dumosa *pendere* procul de rupe videbo.

Half way down
Hangs one who gathers samphire,[1]

is the well-known expression of Shakespeare, delineating an ordinary image upon the cliffs of Dover. In these two instances is a slight exertion of the faculty which I denominate imagination, in the use of the words; neither the goats nor the samphire-gatherer do literally hang, as does the parrot or the monkey; but, presenting to the senses something of such an appearance, the mind in its activity, for its own gratification, contemplates them as hanging.

As when, far off at sea, a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate or Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs: they on the trading flood
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
Ply, stemming nightly toward the Pole: so seemed
Far off the flying Fiend.[2]

Here is the full strength of the imagination involved in the word *hangs*, and exerted upon the whole image: First, the fleet, an aggregate of many ships, is represented as one mighty person, whose track, we know and feel, is upon the waters; but, taking advantage of its appearance to the senses, the Poet dares to represent it as *hanging in the clouds*, both for the gratification of the mind in contemplating the image itself, and in reference to the motion and appearance of the sublime object to which it is compared.

From images of sight we will pass to those of sound.[3]

Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove *broods;*[4]

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[1] See *King Lear*, act IV. sc. vi. l. 15.—ED.

[2] See *Paradise Lost*, book ii. ll. 636-643.—ED.

[3] The following was added in the editions of 1836-45, "which, as they must necessarily be of a less definite character, shall be selected from other volumes."—ED.

[4] See, in the "Poetical Works," vol. ii. p. 314, *Resolution and Independence*, l. 5.—ED.

of the same bird,

> His voice was *buried* among trees,
> Yet to be come at by the breeze ;
>
> O Cuckoo ! shall I call thee *Bird*,
> Or but a wandering *Voice?*[1]

The stock-dove is said to *coo*, a sound well imitating the note of the bird ; but, by the intervention of the metaphor *broods*, the affections are called in by the imagination to assist in marking the manner in which the bird reiterates and prolongs her soft note, as if herself delighting to listen to it, and participating of a still and quiet satisfaction, like that which may be supposed inseparable from the continuous process of incubation. "His voice was buried among trees," a metaphor expressing the love of *seclusion* by which this Bird is marked ; and characterising its note as not partaking of the shrill and the piercing, and therefore more easily deadened by the intervening shade ; yet a note so peculiar, and withal so pleasing, that the breeze, gifted with that love of the sound which the Poet feels, penetrates the shade in which it is entombed, and conveys it to the ear of the listener.

> Shall I call thee Bird,
> Or but a wandering Voice?

This concise interrogation characterises the seeming ubiquity of the voice of the cuckoo, and dispossesses the creature almost of a corporeal existence ; the Imagination being tempted to this exertion of her power by a consciousness in the memory that the cuckoo is almost perpetually heard throughout the season of spring, but seldom becomes an object of sight.

Thus far of images independent of each other, and immediately endowed by the mind with properties that do not inhere in them, upon an incitement from properties

[1] See, in the "Poetical Works," vol. ii. p. 289, *To the Cuckoo*, ll. 3, 4.—Ed.

and qualities the existence of which is inherent and obvious. These processes of imagination are carried on either by conferring additional properties upon an object, or abstracting from it some of those which it actually possesses, and thus enabling it to re-act upon the mind which hath performed the process, like a new existence.

I pass from the Imagination acting upon an individual image to a consideration of the same faculty employed upon images in a conjunction by which they modify each other. The reader has already had a fine instance before him in the passage quoted from Virgil, where the apparently perilous situation of the goat, hanging upon the shaggy precipice, is contrasted with that of the shepherd, contemplating it from the seclusion of the cavern in which he lies stretched at ease and in security. Take these images separately, and how unaffecting the picture compared with that produced by their being thus connected with, and opposed to, each other!

> As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
> Couched on the bald top of an eminence,
> Wonder to all who do the same espy
> By what means it could thither come, and whence,
> So that it seems a thing endued with sense,
> Like a sea-beast crawled forth, which on a shelf
> Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun himself.
>
> Such seemed this Man: not all alive or dead,
> Nor all asleep, in his extreme old age.
> . . . . . .
> Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
> That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
> And moveth altogether if it move at all.[1]

In these images, the conferring, the abstracting, and the modifying powers of the Imagination, immediately and mediately acting, are all brought into conjunction. The stone is endowed with something of the power of life to

[1] See, in the "Poetical Works," vol. ii. pp. 317, 318, *Resolution and Independence*, ll. 57-78.—Ed.

approximate it to the sea-beast; and the sea-beast stripped of some of its vital qualities to assimilate it to the stone; which intermediate image is thus treated for the purpose of bringing the original image, that of the stone, to a nearer resemblance to the figure and condition of the aged Man, who is divested of so much of the indications of life and motion as to bring him to the point where the two objects unite and coalesce in just comparison. After what has been said, the image of the cloud need not be commented upon.

Thus far of an endowing or modifying power; but the imagination also shapes and *creates;* and how? By innumerable processes; and in none does it more delight than in that of consolidating numbers into unity, and dissolving and separating unity into number,—alterations proceeding from, and governed by, a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers. Recur to the passage already cited from Milton. When the compact Fleet, as one person, has been introduced "Sailing from Bengala," "They," *i.e.*, the "merchants," representing the fleet resolved into a multitude of ships, "ply" their voyage towards the extremities of the earth: "So" (referring to the word "As" in the commencement) "seemed the flying fiend"; the image of his Person acting to recombine the multitude of ships into one body,—the point from which the comparison set out. "So seemed," and to whom seemed? To the heavenly Muse who dictates the poem, to the eye of the Poet's mind, and to that of the reader, present at one moment in the wide Ethiopian, and the next in the solitudes, then first broken in upon, of the infernal regions!

Modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.[1]

Hear again this mighty poet,—speaking of the Messiah going forth to expel from heaven the rebellious angels,

[1] See Horace, *Epistles* ii. 1, 213.—ED.

> Attended by ten thousand thousand Saints
> He onward came : far off his coming shone,—[1]

the retinue of Saints and the Person of the Messiah himself, lost almost and merged in the splendour of that indefinite abstraction, "His coming!"

As I do not mean here to treat this subject further than to throw some light upon the present Volumes, and especially upon one division of them, I shall spare myself and the reader the trouble of considering the Imagination as it deals with thoughts and sentiments, as it regulates the composition of characters, and determines the course of actions; I will not consider it (more than I have already done by implication) as that power which, in the language of one of my most esteemed Friends, "draws all things to one; which makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories, take one colour and serve to one effect."[2] The grand store-houses of enthusiastic and meditative Imagination, of poetical, as contradistinguished from human and dramatic Imagination, are the prophetic and lyrical parts of the Holy Scriptures, and the works of Milton, to which I cannot forbear to add those of Spenser. I select these writers in preference to those of ancient Greece and Rome, because the anthropomorphitism of the Pagan religion subjected the minds of the greatest poets in those countries too much to the bondage of definite form; from which the Hebrews were preserved by their abhorrence of idolatry. This abhorrence was almost as strong in our great epic Poet, both from circumstances of his life, and from the constitution of his mind. However imbued the surface might be with classical literature, he was a Hebrew in soul; and all things tended in him towards the sublime. Spenser, of a gentler nature, maintained his freedom by aid of his allegorical spirit, at one time inciting him to

[1] See *Paradise Lost*, book vi. ll. 767, 768.—Ed.
[2] Charles Lamb upon the genius of Hogarth.—W. W.

create persons out of abstractions; and, at another, by a superior effort of genius, to give the universality and permanence of abstractions to his human beings, by means of attributes and emblems that belong to the highest moral truths and the purest sensations,—of which his character of Una is a glorious example. Of the human and dramatic Imagination the works of Shakespeare are an inexhaustible source.

> I tax not you, ye Elements, with unkindness;
> I never gave you kingdoms, called you Daughters![1]

And if, bearing in mind the many Poets distinguished by this prime quality, whose names I omit to mention; yet justified by a recollection of the insults which the ignorant, the incapable, and the presumptuous, have heaped upon these and my other writings, I may be permitted to anticipate the judgment of posterity upon myself, I shall declare (censurable, I grant, if the notoriety of the fact above stated does not justify me) that I have given, in these unfavourable times, evidence of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of Man, his natural affections, and his acquired passions; which have the same ennobling tendency as the productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be holden in undying remembrance.

This subject may be dismissed with observing[2]—that, in the series of Poems placed under the head of Imagination, I have begun with one of the earliest processes of Nature in the development of this faculty. Guided by one of my own primary consciousnesses, I have represented a commutation and transfer of internal feelings, co-operating with external accidents to plant, for immortality, conjoined impressions of sound and sight in the celestial soil of the Imagination. The Boy,

[1] See *King Lear*, act III. scene ii. ll. 16, 17.—ED.

[2] The following paragraph was omitted in the edition of 1845. —ED.

there introduced, is listening, with something of a feverish and restless anxiety, for the recurrence of the riotous sounds which he had previously excited; and, at the moment when the intenseness of his mind is beginning to remit, he is surprised into a perception of the solemn and tranquillising images which the Poem describes.—The Poems next in succession exhibit the faculty exerting itself upon various objects of the external universe; then follow others, where it is employed upon feelings, characters, and actions[1]; and the class is concluded with imaginative pictures of moral, political, and religious sentiments.

To the mode in which Fancy has already been characterised as the power of evoking and combining, or, as my friend Mr. Coleridge has styled it, "the aggregative and associative power," my objection is only that the definition is too general. To aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine, belong as well to the Imagination as to the Fancy; but either the materials evoked and combined are different; or they are brought together under a different law, and for a different purpose. Fancy does not require that the materials which she makes use of should be susceptible of change in their constitution, from her touch: and, where they admit of modification, it is enough for her purpose if it be slight, limited, and evanescent. Directly the reverse of these, are the desires and demands of the Imagination. She recoils from everything but the plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite. She leaves it to Fancy to describe Queen Mab as coming,

> In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
> On the fore-finger of an alderman.[2]

Having to speak of stature, she does not tell you that

[1] Such of these as were furnished by Scottish subjects have since been arranged in a class, entitled, "Memorials of Tours in Scotland."—W. W.

[2] See *Romeo and Juliet*, act I. scene iv. ll. 55, 56.—ED.

her gigantic Angel was as tall as Pompey's Pillar; much less that he was twelve cubits, or twelve hundred cubits high; or that his dimensions equalled those of Teneriffe or Atlas;—because these, and if they were a million times as high it would be the same, are bounded. The expression is, "His stature reached the sky!" the illimitable firmament!—When the Imagination frames a comparison, if it does not strike on the first presentation, a sense of the truth of the likeness, from the moment that it is perceived grows—and continues to grow—upon the mind; the resemblance depending less upon outline of form and feature, than upon expression and effect; less upon casual and outstanding, than upon inherent and internal properties: moreover, the images invariably modify each other.—The law under which the processes of Fancy are carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic, as the objects happen to be appositely produced or fortunately combined. Fancy depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images; trusting that their number and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value: or she prides herself upon the curious subtilty and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities. If she can win you over to her purpose, and impart to you her feelings, she cares not how unstable or transitory may be her influence, knowing that it will not be out of her power to resume it upon an apt occasion. But the Imagination is conscious of an indestructible dominion;—the Soul may fall away from it, not being able to sustain its grandeur; but, if once felt and acknowledged, by no act of any other faculty of the mind can it be relaxed, impaired, or diminished.—Fancy is given to quicken and to beguile the temporal part of our nature, Imagination to incite and to support the eternal—Yet is it not the less true that Fancy, as she is an active, is also, under

her own laws and in her own spirit, a creative faculty. In what manner Fancy ambitiously aims at a rivalship with the Imagination, and Imagination stoops to work with the materials of Fancy, might be illustrated from the compositions of all eloquent writers, whether in prose or verse; and chiefly from those of our own Country. Scarcely a page of the impassioned parts of Bishop Taylor's works can be opened that shall not afford examples. Referring the reader to those inestimable volumes, I will content myself with placing a conceit (ascribed to Lord Chesterfield) in contrast with a passage from *Paradise Lost*:—

> The dews of the evening most carefully shun,
> They are the tears of the sky for the loss of the sun.

After the transgression of Adam, Milton, with other appearances of sympathising Nature, thus marks the immediate consequence,

> Sky lowered, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
> Wept at completion of the mortal sin.[1]

The associating link is the same in each instance; Dew and rain, not distinguishable from the liquid substance of tears, are employed as indications of sorrow. A flash of surprise is the effect in the former case; a flash of surprise and nothing more; for the nature of things does not sustain the combination. In the latter, the effects of the act, of which there is this immediate consequence and visible sign, are so momentous, that the mind acknowledges the justice and reasonableness of the sympathy in nature so manifested; and the sky weeps drops of water as if with human eyes, as "Earth had, before, trembled from her entrails, and Nature given a second groan."

Awe-stricken as I am by contemplating the operations of the mind of this truly divine Poet, I scarcely dare

[1] See *Paradise Lost*, book ix. ll. 1002, 1003.—ED.

venture to add that *An Address to an Infant*,[1] which the reader will find under the class of Fancy in the present volumes, exhibits something of this communion and interchange of instruments and functions between the two powers; and is accordingly placed last in the class, as a preparation for that of Imagination, which follows.[2]

Finally, I will refer to Cotton's *Ode upon Winter*,[3] an admirable composition, though stained with some peculiarities of the age in which he lived, for a general illustration of the characteristics of Fancy. The middle part of this ode contains a most lively description of the entrance of Winter, with his retinue, as "A palsied king," and yet a military monarch,—advancing for conquest with his army; the several bodies of which, and their arms and equipments, are described with a rapidity of detail, and a profusion of *fanciful* comparisons, which indicate on the part of the Poet extreme activity of intellect, and a corresponding hurry of delightful feeling. Winter retires from the foe into his fortress, where

> a magazine
> Of sovereign juice is cellared in;
> Liquor that will the siege maintain
> Should Phœbus ne'er return again.[4]

Though myself a water-drinker, I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing what follows, as an instance still more happy of Fancy employed in the treatment of feeling than, in its preceding passages, the Poem supplies of her management of forms.

> 'Tis that that gives the poet rage,
> And thaws the jellied blood of age;
> Matures the young, restores the old,
> And makes the fainting coward bold.

[1] See *Address to my Infant Daughter, Dora.*—Ed.

[2] The preceding paragraph was omitted in the edition of 1845. —Ed.

[3] It was not an ode, although Cotton wrote many odes. He named it *Winter*, and it will be found in his volume of "Poems on Several Occasions."—Ed.

[4] See Cotton's *Winter*, stanza 39.—Ed.

It lays the careful head to rest,
Calms palpitations in the breast,
Renders our lives' misfortune sweet;
. . . . . .

Then let the chill Sirocco blow,
And gird us round with hills of snow,
Or else go whistle to the shore,
And make the hollow mountains roar,

Whilst we together jovial sit
Careless, and crowned with mirth and wit;
Where, though bleak winds confine us home,
Our fancies round the world shall roam.

We'll think of all the Friends we know,
And drink to all worth drinking to;
When having drunk all thine and mine,
We rather shall want healths than wine.

But where Friends fail us, we'll supply
Our friendships with our charity:
Men that remote in sorrows live,
Shall by our lusty brimmers thrive.

We'll drink the wanting into wealth,
And those that languish into health,
The afflicted into joy: th' opprest
Into security and rest.

The worthy in disgrace shall find
Favour return again more kind,
And in restraint who stifled lie,
Shall taste the air of liberty.

The brave shall triumph in success,
The lovers shall have mistresses,
Poor unregarded Virtue, praise,
And the neglected Poet, bays.

Thus shall our healths do others good,
Whilst we ourselves do all we would;
For, freed from envy and from care,
What would we be but what we are?[1]

[1] See *Winter*, stanzas 40 to 49.—Ed.

It remains that I should express my regret at the necessity of separating my compositions from some beautiful Poems of Mr. Coleridge, with which they have been long associated in publication. The feelings with which that joint publication was made, have been gratified; its end is answered; and the time is come when considerations of general propriety dictate the separation. Three short pieces (now first published) are the work of a female Friend; and the reader, to whom they may be acceptable, is indebted to me for his pleasure; if any one regard them with dislike, or be disposed to condemn them, let the censure fall upon him, who, trusting in his own sense of their merit and their fitness for the place which they occupy, *extorted* them from the authoress.[1]

When I sat down to write this Preface, it was my intention to have made it more comprehensive; but, thinking that I ought rather to apologise for detaining the reader so long, I will here conclude.

[1] The "pieces" in question were written by Dorothy Wordsworth. The preceding paragraph was omitted in the edition of 1845.—ED.

XV

ESSAY SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE PREFACE, 1815

ESSAY SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE PREFACE

WITH the young of both sexes, Poetry is, like love, a passion; but, for much the greater part of those who have been proud of its power over their minds, a necessity soon arises of breaking the pleasing bondage: or it relaxes of itself; the thoughts being occupied in domestic cares, or the time engrossed by business. Poetry then becomes only an occasional recreation; while to those whose existence passes away in a course of fashionable pleasure, it is a species of luxurious amusement. In middle and declining age, a scattered number of serious persons resort to Poetry, as to religion, for a protection against the pressure of trivial employments, and as a consolation for the afflictions of life. And, lastly, there are many, who, having been enamoured of this art in their youth, have found leisure, after youth was spent, to cultivate general literature; in which Poetry has continued to be comprehended *as a study*.

Into the above classes the readers of Poetry may be divided; Critics abound in them all; but from the last only can opinions be collected of absolute value, and worthy to be depended upon, as prophetic of the destiny of a new work. The young, who in nothing can escape delusion, are especially subject to it in their intercourse with Poetry. The cause, not so obvious as the fact is unquestionable, is the same as that from which erroneous judgments in this art, in the minds of men of all ages, chiefly proceed; but upon Youth it operates with peculiar

force. The appropriate business of Poetry (which nevertheless, if genuine, is as permanent as pure science) her appropriate employment, her privilege and her *duty*, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear;* not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses*, and to the *passions*. What a world of delusion does this acknowledged obligation [1] prepare for the inexperienced! what temptations to go astray are here held forth for them whose thoughts have been little disciplined by the understanding, and whose feelings revolt from the sway of reason!—When a juvenile reader is in the height of his rapture with some vicious passage, should experience throw in doubts, or common-sense suggest suspicions, a lurking consciousness that the realities of the Muse are but shows, and that her liveliest excitements are raised by transient shocks of conflicting feeling and successive assemblages of contradictory thoughts—is ever at hand to justify extravagance, and to sanction absurdity. But, it may be asked, as these illusions are unavoidable and, no doubt, eminently useful to the mind as a process, what good can be gained by making observations, the tendency of which is to diminish the confidence of youth in its feelings, and thus to abridge its innocent and even profitable pleasures? The reproach implied in the question could not be warded off, if Youth were incapable of being delighted with what is truly excellent; or, if these errors always terminated of themselves in due season. But, with the majority, though their force be abated, they continue through life. Moreover, the fire of youth is too vivacious an element to be extinguished or damped by a philosophical remark; and, while there is no danger that what has been said will be injurious or painful to the ardent and the confident, it may prove beneficial to those who, being enthusiastic, are, at the same time, modest and ingenuous.

[1] In the editions of 1820-1832, "this acknowledged principle."—ED.

The intimation may unite with their own misgivings to regulate their sensibility, and to bring in, sooner than it would otherwise have arrived, a more discreet and sound judgment.

If it should excite wonder that men of ability, in later life, whose understandings have been rendered acute by practice in affairs, should be so easily and so far imposed upon when they happen to take up a new work in verse, this appears to be the cause ;—that, having discontinued their attention to poetry, whatever progress may have been made in other departments of knowledge, they have not, as to this art, advanced in true discernment beyond the age of youth. If, then, a new poem fall in their way, whose attractions are of that kind which would have enraptured them during the heat of youth, the judgment not being improved to a degree that they shall be disgusted, they are dazzled ; and prize and cherish the faults for having had power to make the present time vanish before them, and to throw the mind back, as by enchantment, into the happiest season of life. As they read, powers seem to be revived, passions are regenerated, and pleasures restored. The Book was probably taken up after an escape from the burden of business, and with a wish to forget the world, and all its vexations and anxieties. Having obtained this wish, and so much more, it is natural that they should make report as they have felt.

If Men of mature age, through want of practice, be thus easily beguiled into admiration of absurdities, extravagances, and misplaced ornaments, thinking it proper that their understandings should enjoy a holiday, while they are unbending their minds with verse, it may be expected that such readers will resemble their former selves also in strength of prejudice, and an inaptitude to be moved by the unostentatious beauties of a pure style. In the higher Poetry, an enlightened Critic chiefly looks for a reflection of the wisdom of the heart and the grandeur of the imagination. Wherever these appear,

simplicity accompanies them; Magnificence herself, when legitimate, depending upon a simplicity of her own, to regulate her ornaments. But it is a well-known property of human nature, that our estimates are ever governed by comparisons, of which we are conscious, with various degrees of distinctness. Is it not, then, inevitable (confining these observations to the effects of style merely) that an eye, accustomed to the glaring hues of diction by which such readers are caught and excited, will for the most part be rather repelled than attracted by an original work, the colouring of which is disposed according to a pure and refined scheme of harmony? It is in the fine arts as in the affairs of life, no man can *serve* (*i.e.*, obey with zeal and fidelity) two masters.

As Poetry is most just to its own divine origin when it administers the comforts and breathes the spirit of religion, they who have learned to perceive this truth, and who betake themselves to reading verse for sacred purposes, must be preserved from numerous illusions to which the two classes of readers, whom we have been considering, are liable. But, as the mind grows serious from the weight of life, the range of its passions is contracted accordingly; and its sympathies become so exclusive, that many species of high excellence wholly escape, or but languidly excite, its notice. Besides, men who read from religious or moral inclinations, even when the subject is of that kind which they approve, are beset with misconceptions and mistakes peculiar to themselves. Attaching so much importance to the truths which interest them, they are prone to overrate the Authors by whom these truths are expressed and enforced. They come prepared to impart so much passion to the Poet's language, that they remain unconscious how little, in fact, they receive from it. And, on the other hand, religious faith is to him who holds it so momentous a thing, and error appears to be attended with such tremendous consequences, that, if opinions touching upon religion occur which the reader condemns, he not only cannot sympathise

with them, however animated the expression, but there is, for the most part, an end put to all satisfaction and enjoyment. Love, if it before existed, is converted into dislike; and the heart of the reader is set against the Author and his book.—To these excesses, they, who from their professions ought to be the most guarded against them, are perhaps the most liable; I mean those sects whose religion, being from the calculating understanding, is cold and formal. For when Christianity, the religion of humility, is founded upon the proudest faculty of our nature, what can be expected but contradictions? Accordingly, believers of this cast are at one time contemptuous; at another, being troubled, as they are, and must be, with inward misgivings, they are jealous and suspicious:—and at all seasons, they are under temptation to supply, by the heat with which they defend their tenets, the animation which is wanting to the constitution of the religion itself.

Faith was given to man that his affections, detached from the treasures of time, might be inclined to settle upon those of eternity:—the elevation of his nature, which this habit produces on earth, being to him a presumptive evidence of a future state of existence; and giving him a title to partake of its holiness. The religious man values what he sees chiefly as an "imperfect shadowing forth" of what he is incapable of seeing. The concerns of religion refer to indefinite objects, and are too weighty for the mind to support them without relieving itself by resting a great part of the burden upon words and symbols. The commerce between Man and his Maker cannot be carried on but by a process where much is represented in little, and the Infinite Being accommodates himself to a finite capacity. In all this may be perceived the affinity between Religion and Poetry; between Religion—making up the deficiencies of reason by faith—and Poetry, passionate for the instruction of reason; between Religion—whose element is infinitude, and whose ultimate trust is the

supreme of things, submitting herself to circumscription and reconciled to substitutions—and Poetry, ethereal and transcendent, yet incapable to sustain her existence without sensuous incarnation. In this community of nature may be perceived also the lurking incitements of kindred error;—so that we shall find that no poetry has been more subject to distortion, than that species, the argument and scope of which is religious; and no lovers of the art have gone farther astray than the pious and the devout.

Whither then shall we turn for that union of qualifications which must necessarily exist before the decisions of a critic can be of absolute value? For a mind at once poetical and philosophical; for a critic whose affections are as free and kindly as the spirit of society, and whose understanding is severe as that of dispassionate government? Where are we to look for that initiatory composure of mind which no selfishness can disturb? For a natural sensibility that has been tutored into correctness without losing anything of its quickness; and for active faculties capable of answering the demands which an Author of original imagination shall make upon them, associated with a judgment that cannot be duped into admiration by aught that is unworthy of it?—among those and those only, who, never having suffered their youthful love of Poetry to remit much of its force, have applied to the consideration of the laws of this art the best power of their understandings. At the same time it must be observed—that, as this class comprehends the only judgments which are trustworthy, so does it include the most erroneous and perverse. For to be mis-taught is worse than to be untaught; and no perverseness equals that which is supported by system, no errors are so difficult to root out as those which the understanding has pledged its credit to uphold. In this class are contained censors, who, if they be pleased with what is good, are pleased with it only by imperfect glimpses, and upon false principles;

who, should they generalise rightly, to a certain point, are sure to suffer for it in the end; who, if they stumble upon a sound rule, are fettered by misapplying it, or by straining it too far; being incapable of perceiving when it ought to yield to one of higher order. In it are found critics too petulant to be passive to a genuine poet, and too feeble to grapple with him; men, who take upon them to report of the course which *he* holds whom they are utterly unable to accompany,—confounded if he turn quick upon the wing, dismayed if he soar steadily "into the region";—men of palsied imaginations and indurated hearts; in whose minds all healthy action is languid, who therefore feed as the many direct them, or, with the many, are greedy after vicious provocatives;—judges, whose censure is auspicious, and whose praise ominous! In this class meet together the two extremes of best and worst.

The observations presented in the foregoing series are of too ungracious a nature to have been made without reluctance; and, were it only on this account, I would invite the reader to try them by the test of comprehensive experience. If the number of judges who can be confidently relied upon be in reality so small, it ought to follow that partial notice only, or neglect, perhaps long continued, or attention wholly inadequate to their merits —must have been the fate of most works in the higher departments of poetry; and that, on the other hand, numerous productions have blazed into popularity, and have passed away, leaving scarcely a trace behind them. It will be further found, that when Authors shall have, at length, raised themselves into general admiration and maintained their ground, errors and prejudices have prevailed concerning their genius and their works, which the few who are conscious of those errors and prejudices would deplore, if they were not recompensed by perceiving that there are select Spirits for whom it is ordained that their fame shall be in the world an existence like that of Virtue, which owes its being to the

struggles it makes, and its vigour to the enemies whom it provokes;—a vivacious quality, ever doomed to meet with opposition, and still triumphing over it; and, from the nature of its dominion, incapable of being brought to the sad conclusion of Alexander, when he wept that there were no more worlds for him to conquer.

Let us take a hasty retrospect of the poetical literature of this Country for the greater part of the last two centuries, and see if the facts support these inferences.

Who is there that can now endure to read *The Creation* of Dubartas? Yet all Europe once resounded with his praise; he was caressed by kings; and, when his Poem was translated into our language, *The Faery Queen* faded before it. The name of Spenser, whose genius is of a higher order than even that of Ariosto, is at this day scarcely known beyond the limits of the British Isles. And if the value of his works is to be estimated from the attention now paid to them by his countrymen, compared with that which they bestow on those of some other writers, it must be pronounced small indeed.

> The laurel meed of mighty conquerors
> And poets *sage*[1]

are his own words; but his wisdom has, in this particular, been his worst enemy; while its opposite, whether in the shape of folly or madness, has been *their* best friend. But he was a great power, and bears a high name: the laurel has been awarded to him.

A dramatic Author, if he write for the stage, must adapt himself to the taste of the audience, or they will not endure him; accordingly the mighty genius of Shakspeare was listened to. The people were delighted; but I am not sufficiently versed in stage antiquities to determine whether they did not flock as eagerly to the representation of many pieces of contemporary Authors, wholly undeserving to appear upon the same boards.

[1] See *The Faërie Queene*, book I. canto i. stanza 8.—ED.

Had there been a formal contest for superiority among dramatic writers, that Shakspeare, like his predecessors, Sophocles and Euripides, would have often been subject to the mortification of seeing the prize adjudged to sorry competitors, becomes too probable, when we reflect that the admirers of Settle and Shadwell were, in a later age, as numerous, and reckoned as respectable in point of talent, as those of Dryden. At all events, that Shakspeare stooped to accommodate himself to the People, is sufficiently apparent; and one of the most striking proofs of his almost omnipotent genius, is, that he could turn to such glorious purpose those materials which the prepossessions of the age compelled him to make use of. Yet even this marvellous skill appears not to have been enough to prevent his rivals from having some advantage over him in public estimation; else how can we account for passages and scenes that exist in his works, unless upon a supposition that some of the grossest of them, a fact which in my own mind I have no doubt of, were foisted in by the Players, for the gratification of the many?

But that his Works, whatever might be their reception on the stage, made little impression upon the ruling Intellects of the time, may be inferred from the fact that Lord Bacon, in his multifarious writings, nowhere either quotes or alludes to him.[1]—His dramatic excellence enabled him to resume possession of the stage after the Restoration; but Dryden tells us that in his time two of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were acted for one of Shakspeare. And so faint and limited was the perception of the poetic beauties of his dramas in the time of Pope, that, in his Edition of the Plays, with a

[1] The learned Hakewill (a third edition of whose book bears date 1635), writing to refute the error "touching Nature's perpetual and universal decay," cites triumphantly the names of Ariosto, Tasso, Bartas, and Spenser, as instances that poetic genius had not degenerated; but he makes no mention of Shakspeare.—W. W.

view of rendering to the general reader a necessary service, he printed between inverted commas those passages which he thought most worthy of notice.

At this day, the French Critics have abated nothing of their aversion to this darling of our nation: "the English, with their buffon de Shakspeare," is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire. Baron Grimm is the only French writer who seems to have perceived his infinite superiority to the first names of the French Theatre; an advantage which the Parisian critic owed to his German blood and German education. The most enlightened Italians, though well acquainted with our language, are wholly incompetent to measure the proportions of Shakspeare. The Germans only, of foreign nations, are approaching towards a knowledge and feeling of what he is. In some respects they have acquired a superiority over the fellow-countrymen of the Poet: for among us it is a current, I might say, an established opinion, that Shakspeare is justly praised when he is pronounced to be "a wild, irregular genius, in whom great faults are compensated by great beauties." How long may it be before this misconception passes away, and it becomes universally acknowledged that the judgment of Shakspeare in the selection of his materials, and in the manner in which he has made them, heterogeneous as they often are, constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all to one great end, is not less admirable than his imagination, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human Nature!

There is extant a small Volume of miscellaneous poems, in which Shakspeare expresses his own feelings in his own person. It is not difficult to conceive that the Editor, George Steevens, should have been insensible to the beauties of one portion of that Volume, the Sonnets; though in no part of the writings of this Poet is found, in an equal compass, a greater number of exquisite feelings felicitously expressed. But, from regard to the Critic's own credit, he would not have ventured to

talk of an act of parliament not being strong enough to compel the perusal of these little pieces,[1] or any production of Shakspeare, if he had not known that the people of England were ignorant of the treasures contained in them; and if he had not, moreover, shared the too common propensity of human nature to exult over a supposed fall into the mire of a genius whom he had been compelled to regard with admiration, as an inmate of the celestial regions—"there sitting where he durst not soar."

Nine years before the death of Shakspeare, Milton was born; and early in life he published several small Poems, which, though on their first appearance they were praised by a few of the judicious, were afterwards neglected to that degree, that Pope, in his youth, could pilfer from them without risk of its being known. Whether these Poems are at this day justly appreciated I will not undertake to decide; nor would it imply a severe reflection upon the mass of readers to suppose the contrary; seeing that a man of the acknowledged genius of Voss, the German Poet, could suffer their spirit to evaporate; and could change their character, as is done in the translation made by him of the most popular of those pieces. At all events, it is certain that these Poems of Milton are now much read, and loudly praised; yet they were little heard of till more than 150 years after their publication; and of the Sonnets, Dr. Johnson, as appears from Boswell's Life of him, was in the habit of thinking and speaking as contemptuously as Steevens wrote upon those of Shakspeare.

About the time when the Pindaric Odes of Cowley and his imitators, and the productions of that class of curious thinkers whom Dr. Johnson has strangely styled

[1] This flippant insensibility was publicly reprehended by Mr. Coleridge, in a course of Lectures upon Poetry, given by him at the Royal Institution. For the various merits of thought and language in Shakspeare's Sonnets see Numbers 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 54, 64, 66, 68, 73, 76, 86, 91, 92, 93, 97, 98, 105, 107, 108, 109, 111, 113, 114, 116, 117, 129, and many others.—W. W.

metaphysical Poets, were beginning to lose something of that extravagant admiration which they had excited, *Paradise Lost* made its appearance. "Fit audience find though few," was the petition addressed by the Poet to his inspiring Muse. I have said elsewhere that he gained more than he asked; this I believe to be true; but Dr. Johnson has fallen into a gross mistake when he attempts to prove, by the sale of the work, that Milton's Countrymen were "*just* to it" upon its first appearance. Thirteen hundred copies were sold in two years; an uncommon example, he asserts, of the prevalence of genius in opposition to so much recent enmity as Milton's public conduct had excited. But, be it remembered that, if Milton's political and religious opinions, and the manner in which he announced them, had raised him many enemies, they had procured him numerous friends; who, as all personal danger was passed away at the time of publication, would be eager to procure the master-work of a man whom they revered, and whom they would be proud of praising. Take, from the number of purchasers, persons of this class, and also those who wished to possess the Poem as a religious work, and but few I fear would be left who sought for it on account of its poetical merits. The demand did not immediately increase; "for," says Dr. Johnson, "many more readers" (he means persons in the habit of reading Poetry) "than were supplied at first the Nation did not afford." How careless must a writer be who can make this assertion in the face of so many existing title-pages to belie it! Turning to my own shelves, I find the folio of Cowley, seventh Edition, 1681. A book near it is Flatman's Poems, fourth Edition, 1686; Waller, fifth Edition, same date. The poems of Norris of Bemerton not long after went, I believe, through nine editions. What further demand there might be for these works I do not know; but I well remember, that, twenty-five years ago, the booksellers' stalls in London swarmed with the folios of

Cowley. This is not mentioned in disparagement of that able writer and amiable man; but merely to show—that, if Milton's work was not more read, it was not because readers did not exist at the time. The early editions of *Paradise Lost* were printed in a shape which allowed them to be sold at a low price, yet only three thousand copies of the work were sold in eleven years; and the nation, says Dr. Johnson, had been satisfied from 1623 to 1664, that is, forty-one years, with only two editions of the works of Shakspeare; which probably did not together make one thousand copies; facts adduced by the critic to prove the "paucity of readers." There were readers in multitudes; but their money went for other purposes, as their admiration was fixed elsewhere. We are authorised, then, to affirm that the reception of *Paradise Lost*, and the slow progress of its fame, are proofs as striking as can be desired that the positions which I am attempting to establish are not erroneous.[1]—How amusing to shape to one's self such a critique as a Wit of Charles's days, or a Lord of the Miscellanies or trading Journalist of King William's time, would have brought forth, if he had set his faculties industriously to work upon this Poem, every where impregnated with *original* excellence.

So strange, indeed, are the obliquities of admiration, that they whose opinions are much influenced by authority will often be tempted to think that there are no fixed principles[2] in human nature for this art to rest upon. I have been honoured by being permitted to peruse, in MS., a tract composed between the period of the

[1] Hughes is express upon this subject: in his dedication of Spenser's Works to Lord Somers, he writes thus:—"It was your lordship's encouraging a beautiful edition of *Paradise Lost* that first brought that incomparable Poem to be generally known and esteemed."—W. W.

[2] This opinion seems actually to have been entertained by Adam Smith, the worst critic, David Hume not excepted, that Scotland, a soil to which this sort of weed seems natural, has produced. —W. W.

Revolution and the close of that century. It is the work of an English Peer of high accomplishments, its object to form the character and direct the studies of his son. Perhaps nowhere does a more beautiful treatise of the kind exist. The good sense and wisdom of the thoughts, the delicacy of the feelings, and the charm of the style, are, throughout, equally conspicuous. Yet the author, selecting among the Poets of his own country those whom he deems most worthy of his son's perusal, particularises only Lord Rochester, Sir John Denham, and Cowley. Writing about the same time, Shaftesbury, an author at present unjustly depreciated, describes the English Muses as only yet lisping in their cradles.

The arts by which Pope, soon afterwards, contrived to procure to himself a more general and a higher reputation than perhaps any English Poet ever attained during his life-time, are known to the judicious. And as well known is it to them, that the undue exertion of these arts is the cause why Pope has for some time held a rank in literature, from which, if he had not been seduced by an over-love of immediate popularity, and had confided more in his native genius, he never could have descended. He bewitched the nation by his melody, and dazzled it by his polished style, and was himself blinded by his own success. Having wandered from humanity in his Eclogues with boyish inexperience, the praise, which these compositions obtained, tempted him into a belief that Nature was not to be trusted, at least in pastoral Poetry. To prove this by example, he put his friend Gay upon writing those Eclogues which the author intended to be burlesque. The instigator of the work, and his admirers, could perceive in them nothing but what was ridiculous. Nevertheless, though these Poems contain some detestable passages, the effect, as Dr. Johnson well observes, "of reality and truth became conspicuous, even when the intention was to show them grovelling and degraded." The Pastorals, ludicrous to those who prided themselves upon their refinement, in

spite of those disgusting passages, "became popular, and were read with delight, as just representations of rural manners and occupations."

Something less than sixty years after the publication of *Paradise Lost*, appeared Thomson's *Winter;* which was speedily followed by his other Seasons. It is a work of inspiration ; much of it is written from himself, and nobly from himself. How was it received? "It was no sooner read," said one of his contemporary biographers, "than universally admired: those only excepted who had not been used to feel, or to look for anything in Poetry, beyond a *point* of satirical or epigrammatic wit, a smart *antithesis* richly trimmed with rhyme, or the softness of an *elegiac* complaint. To such his manly classical spirit could not readily commend itself; till, after a more attentive perusal, they had got the better of their prejudices, and either acquired or affected a truer taste. A few others stood aloof, merely because they had long before fixed the articles of their poetical creed, and resigned themselves to an absolute despair of ever seeing anything new and original. These were somewhat mortified to find their notions disturbed by the appearance of a Poet, who seemed to owe nothing but to nature and his own genius. But, in a short time, the applause became unanimous; every one wondering how so many pictures, and pictures so familiar, should have moved them but faintly to what they felt in his descriptions. His digressions too, the overflowings of a tender benevolent heart, charmed the reader no less; leaving him in doubt, whether he should more admire the Poet or love the Man."

This case appears to bear strongly against us:—but we must distinguish between wonder and legitimate admiration. The subject of the work is the changes produced in the appearances of nature by the revolution of the year: and, by undertaking to write in verse, Thomson pledged himself to treat his subject as became a Poet. Now it is remarkable that, excepting *The*

Nocturnal Reverie of Lady Winchelsea, and a passage or two in the *Windsor Forest* of Pope, the Poetry of the period intervening between the publication of *Paradise Lost* and *The Seasons* does not contain a single new image of External Nature; and scarcely presents a familiar one, from which it can be inferred that the eye of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination. To what a low state knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk, is evident from the style in which Dryden has executed a description of Night in one of his tragedies, and Pope his translation of the celebrated moonlight scene in the *Iliad*. A blind man, in the habit of attending accurately to descriptions casually dropped from the lips of those around him, might easily depict these appearances with more truth. Dryden's lines are vague, bombastic, and senseless[1]; those of Pope, though he had Homer to guide him, are throughout false and contradictory. The verses of Dryden, once highly celebrated, are forgotten; those of Pope still retain their hold upon public estimation,—nay, there is not a passage of descriptive Poetry, which at this day finds so many and such ardent admirers. Strange to think of an enthusiast, as may have been the case with thousands, reciting those verses under the cope of a moonlight sky, without having his raptures in the least disturbed by a suspicion of their absurdity! If these two distinguished writers could habitually think that the visible universe was of so little consequence to a

[1] CORTES, *alone, in a night-gown.*

All things are hushed as nature's self lay dead;
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head.
The little Birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping Flowers beneath the Night-dew sweat:
Even Lust and Envy sleep; yet Love denies
Rest to my soul, and slumber to my eyes.

DRYDEN'S *Indian Emperor*.—W. W.

Poet, that it was scarcely necessary for him to cast his eyes upon it, we may be assured that those passages of the elder Poets which faithfully and poetically describe the phenomena of nature, were not at that time holden in much estimation, and that there was little accurate attention paid to those appearances.

Wonder is the natural product of Ignorance; and as the soil was *in such good condition* at the time of the publication of *The Seasons*, the crop was doubtless abundant. Neither individuals nor nations become corrupt all at once, nor are they enlightened in a moment. Thomson was an inspired poet, but he could not work miracles; in cases where the art of seeing had in some degree been learned, the teacher would further the proficiency of his pupils, but he could do little *more;* though so far does vanity assist men in acts of self-deception, that many would often fancy they recognised a likeness when they knew nothing of the original. Having shown that much of what his biographer deemed genuine admiration must in fact have been blind wonderment,—how is the rest to be accounted for?—Thomson was fortunate in the very title of his poem, which seemed to bring it home to the prepared sympathies of every one; in the next place, notwithstanding his high powers, he writes a vicious style; and his false ornaments are exactly of that kind which would be most likely to strike the undiscerning. He likewise abounds with sentimental common-places, that, from the manner in which they were brought forward, bore an imposing air of novelty. In any well used copy of *The Seasons* the book generally opens of itself with the rhapsody on love, or with one of the stories (perhaps Damon and Musidora); these also are prominent in our collections of Extracts; and are the parts of his Work, which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the author to general notice. Pope, repaying praises which he had received, and wishing to extol him to the highest, only styles him "an elegant and philosophical poet"; nor are we able to

collect any unquestionable proofs that the true characteristics of Thomson's genius as an imaginative poet [1] were perceived, till the elder Warton, almost forty years after the publication of *The Seasons*, pointed them out by a note in his *Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope.* In the *Castle of Indolence* (of which Gray speaks so coldly) these characteristics were almost as conspicuously displayed, and in verse more harmonious, and diction more pure. Yet that fine poem was neglected on its appearance, and is at this day the delight only of a few.

When Thomson died, Collins breathed forth his regrets in an Elegiac Poem, in which he pronounces a poetical curse upon *him* who should regard with insensibility the place where the Poet's remains were deposited. The Poems of the mourner himself have now passed through innumerable editions, and are universally known; but if, when Collins died, the same kind of imprecation had been pronounced by a surviving admirer, small is the number whom it would not have comprehended. The notice which his poems attained during his life-time was so small, and of course the sale so insignificant, that not long before his death he deemed it right to repay to the bookseller the sum which he had advanced for them, and threw the edition into the fire.

Next in importance to *The Seasons* of Thomson, though at considerable distance from that work in order of time, come the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry;* collected, new-modelled, and in many instances (if such a contradiction in terms may be used) composed by the Editor, Dr. Percy. This work did not steal silently into the world, as is evident from the number of legendary tales, that appeared not long after its publication; and had been modelled, as the authors persuaded

[1] Since these observations upon Thomson were written, I have perused the second edition of his *Seasons,* and find that even *that* does not contain the most striking passages which Warton points out for admiration; these, with other improvements, throughout the whole work, must have been added at a later period.—W. W.

themselves, after the old Ballad. The Compilation was, however, ill suited to the then existing taste of city society; and Dr. Johnson, 'mid the little senate to which he gave laws, was not sparing in his exertions to make it an object of contempt. The critic triumphed, the legendary imitators were deservedly disregarded, and, as undeservedly, their ill-imitated models sank, in this country, into temporary neglect; while Bürger, and other able writers of Germany, were translating or imitating these Reliques, and composing, with the aid of inspiration thence derived, poems which are the delight of the German nation. Dr. Percy was so abashed by the ridicule flung upon his labours from the ignorance and insensibility of the persons with whom he lived, that, though while he was writing under a mask he had not wanted resolution to follow his genius into the regions of true simplicity and genuine pathos (as is evinced by the exquisite ballad of Sir Cauline, and by many other pieces), yet when he appeared in his own person and character as a poetical writer, he adopted, as in the tale of the Hermit of Warkworth, a diction scarcely in any one of its features distinguishable from the vague, the glossy, and unfeeling language of his day. I mention this remarkable fact [1] with regret, esteeming the genius of Dr. Percy in this kind of writing superior to that of any other man by whom in modern times it has been cultivated. That even Bürger (to whom Klopstock gave, in my hearing, a commendation which he denied to Goethe and Schiller, pronouncing him to be a genuine poet, and one of the few among the

[1] Shenstone, in his *Schoolmistress*, gives a still more remarkable instance of this timidity. On its first appearance (see Disraeli's second series of the *Curiosities of Literature*), the Poem was accompanied with an absurd prose commentary, showing, as indeed some incongruous expressions in the text imply, that the whole was intended for burlesque. In subsequent editions, the commentary was dropped, and the People have since continued to read in seriousness, doing for the Author what he had not courage openly to venture upon for himself.—W. W.

Germans whose works would last) had not the fine sensibility of Percy, might be shown from many passages, in which he has deserted his original only to go astray. For example,

> Now daye was gone, and night was come,
> And all were fast asleepe,
> All save the Lady Emeline,
> Who sate in her bowre to weepe:
>
> And soone she heard her true Love's voice
> Low whispering at the walle,
> "Awake, awake, my dear Ladye,
> 'Tis I thy true-love call."

Which is thus tricked out and dilated:—

> Als nun die Nacht Gebirg' und Thal
> Vermummt in Rabenschatten,
> Und Hochburgs Lampen überall
> Schon ausgeflimmert hatten,
> Und alles tief entschlafen war;
> Doch nur das Fräulein immerdar,
> Voll Fieberangst, noch wachte,
> An seinen Ritter dachte:
> Da horch! Ein süsser Liebeston
> Kam leis' empor geflogen.
> "Ho, Trüdchen, ho! Da bin ich schon!
> Frisch auf! Dich angezogen!"

But from humble ballads we must ascend to heroics.

All hail, Macpherson! hail to thee, Sire of Ossian! The Phantom was begotten by the snug embrace of an impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition—it travelled southward, where it was greeted with acclamation, and the thin Consistence took its course through Europe, upon the breath of popular applause. The Editor of the *Reliques* had indirectly preferred a claim to the praise of invention, by not concealing that his supplementary labours were considerable! how selfish his conduct, contrasted with that of the disinterested Gael, who, like Lear, gives his kingdom away, and is content to become a pensioner upon his own issue

for a beggarly pittance! Open this far-famed Book! I have done so at random, and the beginning of the *Epic Poem Temora*, in eight Books, presents itself. "The blue waves of Ullin roll in light. The green hills are covered with day. Trees shake their dusky heads in the breeze. Gray torrents pour their noisy streams. Two green hills with aged oaks surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there. On its banks stood Cairbar of Atha. His spear supports the king: the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac rises on his soul with all his ghastly wounds." Precious memorandums from the pocket-book of the blind Ossian!

If it be unbecoming, as I acknowledge that for the most part it is, to speak disrespectfully of Works that have enjoyed for a length of time a widely-spread reputation, without at the same time producing irrefragable proofs of their unworthiness, let me be forgiven upon this occasion. Having had the good fortune to be born and reared in a mountainous country, from my very childhood I have felt the falsehood that pervades the volumes imposed upon the world under the name of Ossian. From what I saw with my own eyes, I knew that the imagery was spurious. In nature everything is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness. In Macpherson's work it is exactly the reverse; everything (that is not stolen) is in this manner defined, insulated, dislocated, deadened,—yet nothing distinct. It will always be so when words are substituted for things. To say that the characters never could exist, that the manners are impossible, and that a dream has more substance than the whole state of society, as there depicted, is doing nothing more than pronouncing a censure which Macpherson defied; when, with the steeps of Morven before his eyes, he could talk so familiarly of his Car-borne heroes;—of Morven, which, if one may judge of its appearance at the distance of a few miles, contains scarcely an acre of ground sufficiently accommodating for a sledge to be trailed

along its surface.—Mr. Malcolm Laing has ably shown that the diction of this pretended translation is a motley assemblage from all quarters; but he is so fond of making out parallel passages as to call poor Macpherson to account for his very "*ands*" and his "*buts*".' and he has weakened his argument by conducting it as if he thought that every striking resemblance was a *conscious* plagiarism. It is enough that the coincidences are too remarkable for its being probable or possible that they could arise in different minds without communication between them. Now as the Translators of the Bible, and Shakspeare, Milton, and Pope, could not be indebted to Macpherson, it follows that he must have owed his fine feathers to them; unless we are prepared gravely to assert, with Madame de Staël, that many of the characteristic beauties of our most celebrated English Poets are derived from the ancient Fingallian; in which case the modern translator would have been but giving back to Ossian his own. It is consistent that Lucien Buonaparte, who could censure Milton for having surrounded Satan in the infernal regions with courtly and regal splendour, should pronounce the modern Ossian to be the glory of Scotland;—a country that has produced a Dunbar, a Buchanan, a Thomson, and a Burns. These opinions are of ill omen for the Epic ambition of him who has given them to the world.

Yet, much as these pretended treasures of antiquity have been admired, they have been wholly uninfluential upon the literature of the Country. No succeeding writer appears to have caught from them a ray of inspiration; no Author, in the least distinguished, has ventured formally to imitate them—except the boy, Chatterton, on their first appearance. He had perceived, from the successful trials which he himself had made in literary forgery, how few critics were able to distinguish between a real ancient medal and a counterfeit of modern manufacture; and he set himself to the work of filling a magazine with *Saxon Poems*,—counterparts of

those of Ossian, as like his as one of his misty stars is to another. This incapability to amalgamate with the literature of the Island, is, in my estimation, a decisive proof that the book is essentially unnatural; nor should I require any other to demonstrate it to be a forgery, audacious as worthless.—Contrast, in this respect, the effect of Macpherson's publication with the *Reliques* of Percy, so unassuming, so modest in their pretensions! —I have already stated how much Germany is indebted to this latter work; and for our own country, its Poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the *Reliques*; I know that it is so with my friends; and, for myself, I am happy on this occasion to make a public avowal of my own.

Dr. Johnson, more fortunate in his contempt of the labours of Macpherson than those of his modest friend, was solicited not long after to furnish Prefaces, biographical and critical, for the works of some of the most eminent English Poets. The booksellers took upon themselves to make the collection: they referred probably to the most popular miscellanies, and, unquestionably, to their books of accounts; and decided upon the claim of authors to be admitted into a body of the most eminent, from the familiarity of their names with the readers of that day, and by the profits, which, from the sale of his works, each had brought and was bringing to the Trade. The Editor was allowed a limited exercise of discretion, and the Authors whom he recommended are scarcely to be mentioned without a smile. We open the volume of Prefatory Lives, and to our astonishment the *first* name we find is that of Cowley!—What is become of the morning-star of English Poetry? Where is the bright Elizabethan constellation? Or, if names be more acceptable than images, where is the ever-to-be-honoured Chaucer? where is Spenser? where Sidney? and, lastly, where he,

whose rights as a Poet, contradistinguished from those which he is universally allowed to possess as a Dramatist, we have vindicated,—where Shakspeare? These and a multitude of others not unworthy to be placed near them, their contemporaries and successors, we have *not*. But in their stead, we have (could better be expected when precedence was to be settled by an abstract of reputation at any given period made, as in this case before us?) Roscommon, and Stepney, and Phillips, and Walsh, and Smith, and Duke, and King, and Spratt—Halifax, Granville, Sheffield, Congreve, Broome, and other reputed Magnates; metrical writers utterly worthless and useless, except for occasions like the present, when their productions are referred to as evidence what a small quantity of brain is necessary to procure a considerable stock of admiration, provided the aspirant will accommodate himself to the likings and fashions of his day.

As I do not mean to bring down this retrospect to our own times, it may with propriety be closed at the era of this distinguished event. From the literature of other ages and countries, proofs equally cogent might have been adduced, that the opinions announced in the former part of this Essay are founded upon truth. It was not an agreeable office, nor a prudent undertaking to declare them; but their importance seemed to render it a duty. It may still be asked, where lies the particular relation of what has been said to these Volumes? The question will be easily answered by the discerning Reader who is old enough to remember the taste that prevailed when some of these pieces were first published, seventeen years ago; who has also observed to what degree the poetry of this Island has since that period been coloured by them; and who is further aware of the unremitting hostility with which, upon some principle or other, they have each and all been opposed. A sketch of my own notion of the constitution of Fame has been given: and, as far as concerns myself, I have cause to

be satisfied. The love, the admiration, the indifference, the slight, the aversion, and even the contempt, with which these Poems have been received, knowing, as I do, the source within my own mind, from which they have proceeded, and the labour and pains which, when labour and pains appeared needful, have been bestowed upon them, must all, if I think consistently, be received as pledges and tokens, bearing the same general impression, though widely different in value:—they are all proofs that for the present time I have not laboured in vain; and afford assurances, more or less authentic, that the products of my industry will endure.

If there be one conclusion more forcibly pressed upon us than another by the review which has been given of the fortunes and fate of poetical Works, it is this,—that every author, as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed: so has it been, so will it continue to be. This remark was long since made to me by the philosophical Friend for the separation of whose poems from my own I have previously expressed my regret. The predecessors of an original Genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with them;—and much he will have in common; but, for what is peculiarly his own, he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road:—he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps.

And where lies the real difficulty of creating that taste by which a truly original Poet is to be relished? Is it in breaking the bonds of custom, in overcoming the prejudices of false refinement, and displacing the aversions of inexperience? Or, if he labour for an object which here and elsewhere I have proposed to myself, does it consist in divesting the reader of the pride that induces him to dwell upon those points wherein men differ from each other, to the exclusion of those in which all men are alike, or the same; and in making him ashamed of the vanity that renders him insensible

of the appropriate excellence which civil arrangements, less unjust than might appear, and Nature illimitable in her bounty, have conferred on men who stand below him in the scale of society? Finally, does it lie in establishing that dominion over the spirits of readers by which they are to be humbled and humanised, in order that they may be purified and exalted?

If these ends are to be attained by the mere communication of *knowledge*, it does *not* lie here. TASTE, I would remind the reader, like IMAGINATION, is a word which has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confined them. It is a metaphor, taken from a *passive* sense of the human body, and transferred to things which are in their essence *not* passive,—to intellectual *acts* and *operations*. The word, Imagination, has been overstrained, from impulses honourable to mankind, to meet the demands of the faculty which is perhaps the noblest of our nature. In the instance of Taste, the process has been reversed; and from the prevalence of dispositions at once injurious and discreditable,—being no other than that selfishness which is the child of apathy,—which, as Nations decline in productive and creative power, makes them value themselves upon a presumed refinement of judging. Poverty of language is the primary cause of the use which we make of the word, Imagination: but the word, Taste, has been stretched to the sense that it bears in modern Europe by habits of self-conceit, inducing that inversion in the order of things whereby a passive faculty is made paramount among the faculties conversant with the fine arts. Proportion and congruity, the requisite knowledge being supposed, are subjects upon which taste may be trusted; it is competent to this office;—for in its intercourse with these the mind is *passive*, and is affected painfully or pleasurably as by an instinct. But the profound and the exquisite in feeling, the lofty and universal in thought and imagination; or, in ordinary language, the

pathetic and the sublime ;—are neither of them, accurately speaking, objects of a faculty which could ever without a sinking in the spirit of Nations have been designated by the metaphor—*Taste*. And why? Because without the exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the reader, there can be no adequate sympathy with either of these emotions: without this auxiliary impulse, elevated or profound passion cannot exist.

Passion, it must be observed, is derived from a word which signifies *suffering*: but the connection which suffering has with effort, with exertion, and *action*, is immediate and inseparable. How strikingly is this property of human nature exhibited by the fact, that, in popular language, to be in a passion, is to be angry! But,

> Anger in hasty *words* or *blows*
> Itself discharges on its foes.

To be moved, then, by a passion, is to be excited, often to external, and always to internal, effort; whether for the continuance and strengthening of the passion, or for its suppression, accordingly as the course which it takes may be painful or pleasurable. If the latter, the soul must contribute to its support, or it never becomes vivid, —and soon languishes, and dies. And this brings us to the point. If every great poet with whose writings men are familiar, in the highest exercise of his genius, before he can be thoroughly enjoyed, has to call forth and to communicate *power*, this service, in a still greater degree, falls upon an original writer, at his first appearance in the world. Of genius the only proof is, the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before: of genius, in the fine arts, the only infallible sign is the widening the sphere of human sensibility, for the delight, honour, and benefit of human nature. Genius is the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe: or, if that be not allowed, it is the

application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exercised, or the employment of them in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown. What is all this but an advance, or a conquest, made by the soul of the Poet? Is it to be supposed that the reader can make progress of this kind, like an Indian prince or general — stretched on his palanquin, and borne by his slaves? No; he is invigorated and inspirited by his leader, in order that he may exert himself; for he cannot proceed in quiescence, he cannot be carried like a dead weight. Therefore, to create Taste is to call forth and bestow power, of which knowledge is the effect; and *there* lies the true difficulty.

As the pathetic participates of an *animal* sensation, it might seem—that, if the springs of this emotion were genuine, all men, possessed of competent knowledge of the facts and circumstances, would be instantaneously affected. And, doubtless, in the works of every true poet will be found passages of that species of excellence, which is proved by effects immediate and universal. But there are emotions of the pathetic that are simple and direct, and others—that are complex and revolutionary; some — to which the heart yields with gentleness; others — against which it struggles with pride: these varieties are infinite as the combinations of circumstance and the constitutions of character. Remember, also, that the medium through which, in Poetry, the heart is to be affected — is language; a thing subject to endless fluctuations and arbitrary associations. The genius of the Poet melts these down for his purpose; but they retain their shape and quality to him who is not capable of exerting, within his own mind, a corresponding energy. There is also a meditative, as well as a human, pathos; an enthusiastic, as well as an ordinary, sorrow; a sadness that has its seat in the depths of reason, to which the mind cannot sink gently of itself — but to which it must descend by treading the steps of thought. And for the sublime,—if we consider

what are the cares that occupy the passing day, and how remote is the practice and the course of life from the sources of sublimity, in the soul of Man, can it be wondered that there is little existing preparation for a Poet charged with a new mission to extend its kingdom, and to augment and spread its enjoyments?

Away, then, with the senseless iteration of the word *popular*, applied to new works in Poetry, as if there were no test of excellence in this first of the fine arts but that all men should run after its productions, as if urged by an appetite, or constrained by a spell!—The qualities of writing best fitted for eager reception are either such as startle the world into attention by their audacity and extravagance; or they are chiefly of a superficial kind, lying upon the surfaces of manners; or arising out of a selection and arrangement of incidents, by which the mind is kept upon the stretch of curiosity, and the fancy amused without the trouble of thought. But in every thing which is to send the soul into herself, to be admonished of her weakness, or to be made conscious of her power;—wherever life and nature are described as operated upon by the creative or abstracting virtue of the imagination; wherever the instinctive wisdom of antiquity and her heroic passions uniting, in the heart of the Poet, with the meditative wisdom of later ages, have produced that accord of sublimated humanity, which is at once a history of the remote past and a prophetic annunciation of the remotest future, *there* the Poet must reconcile himself for a season to few and scattered hearers. Grand thoughts, (and Shakspeare must often have sighed over this truth) as they are most naturally and most fitly conceived in solitude, so can they not be brought forth in the midst of plaudits, without some violation of their sanctity. Go to a silent exhibition of the productions of the sister Art, and be convinced that the qualities which dazzle at first sight, and kindle the admiration of the multitude, are essentially different from those by which permanent influence is secured. Let us not shrink

from following up these principles as far as they will carry us, and conclude with observing—that there never has been a period, and perhaps never will be, in which vicious poetry, of some kind or other, has not excited more zealous admiration, and been far more generally read, than good; but this advantage attends the good, that the *individual*, as well as the species, survives from age to age; whereas, of the depraved, though the species be immortal, the individual quickly *perishes;* the object of present admiration vanishes, being supplanted by some other as easily produced; which, though no better, brings with it at least the irritation of novelty—with adaptation, more or less skilful, to the changing humours of the majority of those who are most at leisure to regard poetical works when they first solicit their attention.

Is it the result of the whole, that, in the opinion of the writer, the judgment of the People is not to be respected? The thought is most injurious; and, could the charge be brought against him, he would repel it with indignation. The People have already been justified, and their eulogium pronounced by implication, when it was said, above—that, of *good* poetry, the *individual*, as well as the species, *survives*. And how doth it survive but through the People? what preserves it but their intellect and their wisdom?

> Past and future, are the wings
> On whose support, harmoniously conjoined,
> Moves the great Spirit of human knowledge.
>
> MS.[1]

The voice that issues from this Spirit, is that Vox Populi which the Deity inspires. Foolish must he be who can mistake for this a local acclamation, or a transitory outcry—transitory though it be for years, local though from a Nation. Still more lamentable is his error who can believe that there is any thing of divine infallibility in the

[1] See *The Prelude*, book VI. ll. 448-50.—ED.

clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the PUBLIC, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the PEOPLE. Towards the Public, the Writer hopes that he feels as much deference as it is entitled to: but to the People, philosophically characterised, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge, so far as it exists and moves, at the present, faithfully supported by its two wings, the past and the future, his devout respect, his reverence, is due. He offers it willingly and readily; and, this done, takes leave of his Readers, by assuring them—that, if he were not persuaded that the contents of these Volumes, and the Work to which they are subsidiary, evince something of the "Vision and the Faculty divine;" and that, both in words and things, they will operate in their degree, to extend the domain of sensibility for the delight, the honour, and the benefit of human nature, notwithstanding the many happy hours which he has employed in their composition, and the manifold comforts and enjoyments they have procured to him, he would not, if a wish could do it, save them from immediate destruction;—from becoming at this moment, to the world, as a thing that had never been.

XVI

LETTER TO A FRIEND OF ROBERT BURNS

LETTER TO A FRIEND OF ROBERT BURNS

TO JAMES GRAY, ESQ., EDINBURGH[1]

DEAR SIR,

I have carefully perused the Review of the Life of your friend Robert Burns,[2] which you kindly transmitted to me; the author has rendered a substantial service to the poet's memory; and the annexed letters are all important to the subject. After having expressed this opinion, I shall not trouble you by commenting upon the publication; but will confine myself to the request of Mr. Gilbert Burns, that I would furnish him with my

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[1] James Gray was originally Master of the High School, Dumfries, and was associated with the Poet there. Transferred to the High School of Edinburgh, he taught for well-nigh a quarter of a century with repute. Disappointed of the Rectorship, he retired from Edinburgh to an academy at Belfast. Later, having entered holy orders, he proceeded to India as a chaplain in the East India Company's service. He was stationed at Bhooj, in Cutch, near the mouth of the Indus; and the education of the young Rao of that province having been intrusted to the British Government, Gray was selected as his instructor—being the first Christian honoured with such an appointment in the East. He died at his post in 1830, deeply regretted. He was author of *Cuna of Cheyd* and the *Sabbath among the Mountains*, and several other things, original and editorial. He left a MS. poem, entitled *India*, and a translation of the Gospels into the Cutch dialect of Hindoostanee. He will hold a niche in literature as the fifteenth bard in the *Queen's Wake* who sings of "King Edward's Dream." He married a sister of Mrs. Hogg (A. B. Grosart).—ED.

[2] *A Review of the Life of Robert Burns, and of various Criticisms on his Character and Writings*, by Alexander Peterkin, 1814.—W. W. 1816.

notions upon the best mode of conducting the defence of his brother's injured reputation; a favourable opportunity being now afforded him to convey his sentiments to the world, along with a republication of Dr. Currie's book, which he is about to superintend. From the respect which I have long felt for the character of the person who has thus honoured me, and from the gratitude which, as a lover of poetry, I owe to the genius of his departed relative, I should most gladly comply with this wish; if I could hope that any suggestions of mine would be of service to the cause. But, really, I feel it a thing of much delicacy, to give advice upon this occasion, as it appears to me, mainly, not a question of opinion, or of taste, but a matter of conscience. Mr. Gilbert Burns must know, if any man living does, what his brother was; and no one will deny that he, who possesses this knowledge, is a man of unimpeachable veracity. He has already spoken to the world in contradiction of the injurious assertions that have been made, and has told why he forbore to do this on their first appearance. If it be deemed advisable to reprint Dr. Currie's narrative, without striking out such passages as the author, if he were now alive, would probably be happy to efface, let there be notes attached to the most obnoxious of them, in which the misrepresentations may be corrected, and the exaggerations exposed. I recommend this course, if Dr. Currie's Life is to be republished, as it now stands, in connection with the poems and letters, and especially if prefixed to them; but, in my judgment, it would be best to copy the example which Mason has given in his second edition of Gray's works. There, inverting the order which had been properly adopted, when the Life and Letters were new matter, the poems are placed first; and the rest takes its place as subsidiary to them. If this were done in the intended edition of Burns's works, I should strenuously recommend, that a concise life of the poet be prefixed, from the pen of Gilbert Burns, who has already given public proof how well qualified he is

for the undertaking. I know no better model as to proportion, and the degree of detail required, nor, indeed, as to the general execution, than the life of Milton by Fenton, prefixed to many editions of the *Paradise Lost.* But a more copious narrative would be expected from a brother; and some allowance ought to be made, in this and other respects, for an expectation so natural.

In this prefatory memoir, when the author has prepared himself by reflecting, that fraternal partiality may have rendered him, in some points, not so trust-worthy as others less favoured by opportunity, it will be incumbent upon him to proceed candidly and openly, as far as such a procedure will tend to restore to his brother that portion of public estimation, of which he appears to have been unjustly deprived. Nay, when we recal to mind the black things which have been written of this great man, and the frightful ones that have been insinuated against him; and, as far as the public knew, till lately, without complaint, remonstrance, or disavowal, from his nearest relatives; I am not sure that it would not be best, at this day, explicitly to declare to what degree Robert Burns had given way to pernicious habits, and, as nearly as may be, to fix the point to which his moral character had been degraded. It is a disgraceful feature of the times that this measure should be necessary; most painful to think that a *brother* should have such an office to perform. But, if Gilbert Burns be conscious that the subject will bear to be so treated, he has no choice; the duty has been imposed upon him by the errors into which the former biographer has fallen, in respect to the very principles upon which his work ought to have been conducted.

I well remember the acute sorrow with which, by my own fire-side, I first perused Dr. Currie's Narrative, and some of the letters, particularly of those composed in the latter part of the poet's life. If my pity for Burns was extreme, this pity did not preclude a strong indignation, of which he was not the object. If, said I, it were in the

power of a biographer to relate the truth, the *whole* truth, and nothing *but* the truth, the friends and surviving kindred of the deceased, for the sake of general benefit to mankind, might endure that such heart-rending communication should be made to the world. But in no case is this possible; and, in the present, the opportunities of directly acquiring other than superficial knowledge have been most scanty; for the writer has barely seen the person who is the subject of his tale; nor did his avocations allow him to take the pains necessary for ascertaining what portion of the information conveyed to him was authentic. So much for facts and actions; and to what purpose relate them even were they true, if the narrative cannot be heard without extreme pain; unless they are placed in such a light, and brought forward in such order, that they shall explain their own laws, and leave the reader in as little uncertainty as the mysteries of our nature will allow, respecting the spirit from which they derived their existence, and which governed the agent? But hear on this pathetic and awful subject, the poet himself, pleading for those who have transgressed!

> One point must still be greatly dark,
> The moving *why* they do it,
> And just as lamely can ye mark
> How far, perhaps, they rue it.
>
> Who made the heart, 'tis *he* alone
> Decidedly can try us;
> He knows each chord—its various tone,
> Each spring, its various bias.
>
> Then at the balance let's be mute,
> We never can adjust it;
> What's done we partly may compute,
> But know not what's *resisted*.[1]

[1] See Burns's *Address to the Unco Guid, or the Rigidly Righteous*.—ED.

How happened it that the recollection of this affecting passage did not check so amiable a man as Dr. Currie, while he was revealing to the world the infirmities of its author? He must have known enough of human nature to be assured that men would be eager to sit in judgment, and pronounce *decidedly* upon the guilt or innocence of Burns by his testimony; nay, that there were multitudes whose main interest in the allegations would be derived from the incitements which they found therein to undertake this presumptuous office. And where lies the collateral benefit, or what ultimate advantage can be expected, to counteract the injury that the many are thus tempted to do to their own minds; and to compensate the sorrow which must be fixed in the hearts of the considerate few, by language that proclaims so much, and provokes conjectures as unfavourable as imagination can furnish? Here, said I, being moved beyond what it would become me to express, here is a revolting account of a man of exquisite genius, and confessedly of many high moral qualities, sunk into the lowest depths of vice and misery! But the painful story, notwithstanding its minuteness, is incomplete,—in essentials it is deficient; so that the most attentive and sagacious reader cannot explain how a mind, so well established by knowledge, fell—and continued to fall, without power to prevent or retard its own ruin.

Would a bosom friend of the author, his counsellor and confessor, have told such things, if true, as this book contains? and who, but one possessed of the intimate knowledge which none but a bosom friend can acquire, could have been justified in making these avowals? Such a one, himself a pure spirit, having accompanied, as it were, upon wings, the pilgrim along the sorrowful road which he trod on foot; such a one, neither hurried down by its slippery descents, nor entangled among its thorns, nor perplexed by its windings, nor discomfited by its founderous passages—for the instruction of others—might have delineated, almost as in a map, the way

which the afflicted pilgrim had pursued till the sad close of his diversified journey. In this manner the venerable spirit of Isaac Walton was qualified to have retraced the unsteady course of a highly-gifted man, who, in this lamentable point, and in versatility of genius, bore no unobvious resemblance to the Scottish bard; I mean his friend COTTON—whom, notwithstanding all that the sage must have disapproved in his life, he honoured with the title of son. Nothing like this, however, has the biographer of Burns accomplished; and, with his means of information, copious as in some respects they were, it would have been absurd to attempt it. The only motive, therefore, which could authorise the writing and publishing matter so distressing to read—is wanting!

Nor is Dr. Currie's performance censurable from these considerations alone; for information, which would have been of absolute worth if in his capacity of biographer and editor he had known when to stop short, is rendered unsatisfactory and inefficacious through the absence of this reserve, and from being coupled with statements of improbable and irreconcilable facts. We have the author's letters discharged upon us in showers; but how few readers will take the trouble of comparing those letters with each other, and with the other documents of the publication, in order to come at a genuine knowledge of the writer's character!—The life of Johnson by Boswell had broken through many pre-existing delicacies, and afforded the British public an opportunity of acquiring experience, which before it had happily wanted; nevertheless, at the time when the ill-selected medley of Burns's correspondence first appeared, little progress had been made (nor is it likely that, by the mass of mankind, much ever will be made) in determining what portion of these confidential communications escapes the pen in courteous, yet often innocent, compliance—to gratify the several tastes of correspondents; and as little towards distinguishing opinions and sentiments uttered for the momentary

amusement of the writer's own fancy, from those which his judgment deliberately approves, and his heart faithfully cherishes. But the subject of this book was a man of extraordinary genius; whose birth, education, and employments had placed and kept him in a situation far below that in which the writers and readers of expensive volumes are usually found. Critics upon works of fiction have laid it down as a rule that remoteness of place, in fixing the choice of a subject, and in prescribing the mode of treating it, is equal in effect to distance of time; —restraints may be thrown off accordingly. Judge then of the delusions which artificial distinctions impose, when to a man like Doctor Currie, writing with views so honourable, the *social condition* of the individual of whom he was treating, could seem to place him at such a distance from the exalted reader, that ceremony might be discarded with him, and his memory sacrificed, as it were, almost without compunction. The poet was laid where these injuries could not reach him; but he had a parent, I understand, an admirable woman, still surviving; a brother like Gilbert Burns!—a widow estimable for her virtues; and children, at that time infants, with the world before them, which they must face to obtain a maintenance; who remembered their father probably with the tenderest affection;—and whose opening minds, as their years advanced, would become conscious of so many reasons for admiring him.—Ill-fated child of nature, too frequently thine own enemy,—unhappy favourite of genius, too often misguided,—this is indeed to be "crushed beneath the furrow's weight!"

Why, sir, do I write to you at this length, when all that I had to express in direct answer to the request, which occasioned this letter, lay in such narrow compass?—Because having entered upon the subject, I am unable to quit it!—Your feelings, I trust, go along with mine; and, rising from this individual case to a general view of the subject, you will probably agree with me in opinion that biography, though differing in some

essentials from works of fiction, is nevertheless, like them, an *art*—an art, the laws of which are determined by the imperfections of our nature, and the constitution of society. Truth is not here, as in the sciences, and in natural philosophy, to be sought without scruple, and promulgated for its own sake, upon the mere chance of its being serviceable; but only for obviously justifying purposes, moral or intellectual.

Silence is a privilege of the grave, a right of the departed: let him, therefore, who infringes that right, by speaking publicly of, for, or against, those who cannot speak for themselves, take heed that he opens not his mouth without a sufficient sanction. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*, is a rule in which these sentiments have been pushed to an extreme that proves how deeply humanity is interested in maintaining them. And it was wise to announce the precept thus absolutely; both because there exist in that same nature, by which it has been dictated, so many temptations to disregard it; and because there are powers and influences, within and without us, that will prevent its being literally fulfilled, to the suppression of profitable truth. Penalties of law, conventions of manners, and personal fear, protect the reputation of the living; and something of this protection is extended to the recently dead, who survive, to a certain degree, in their kindred and friends. Few are so insensible as not to feel this, and not to be actuated by the feeling. But only to philosophy enlightened by the affections does it belong justly to estimate the claims of the deceased on the one hand, and of the present age and future generations, on the other; and to strike a balance between them. Such philosophy runs a risk of becoming extinct among us, if the coarse intrusions into the recesses, the gross breaches upon the sanctities, of domestic life, to which we have lately been more and more accustomed, are to be regarded as indications of a vigorous state of public feeling favourable to the maintenance of the liberties of our country. Intelligent

lovers of freedom are from necessity bold and hardy lovers of truth; but, according to the measure in which their love is intelligent, is it attended with a finer discrimination, and a more sensitive delicacy. The wise and good (and all others being lovers of licence rather than of liberty are in fact slaves) respect, as one of the noblest characteristics of Englishmen, that jealousy of familiar approach, which, while it contributes to the maintenance of private dignity, is one of the most efficacious guardians of rational public freedom.

The general obligation upon which I have insisted, is especially binding upon those who undertake the biography of *authors*. Assuredly, there is no cause why the lives of that class of men should be pried into with the same diligent curiosity, and laid open with the same disregard of reserve, which may sometimes be expedient in composing the history of men who have borne an active part in the world. Such thorough knowledge of the good and bad qualities of these latter, as can only be obtained by a scrutiny of their private lives, conduces to explain not only their own public conduct, but that of those with whom they have acted. Nothing of this applies to authors, considered merely as authors. Our business is with their books,—to understand and to enjoy them. And, of poets more especially, it is true—that, if their works be good, they contain within themselves all that is necessary to their being comprehended and relished. It should seem that the ancients thought in this manner; for of the eminent Greek and Roman poets, few and scanty memorials were, I believe, ever prepared; and fewer still are preserved. It is delightful to read what, in the happy exercise of his own genius, Horace chooses to communicate of himself and his friends; but I confess I am not so much a lover of knowledge, independent of its quality, as to make it likely that it would much rejoice me, were I to hear that records of the Sabine poet and his contemporaries, composed upon the Boswellian plan, had been unearthed

among the ruins of Herculaneum. You will interpret what I am writing, *liberally*. With respect to the light which such a discovery might throw upon Roman manners, there would be reasons to desire it: but I should dread to disfigure the beautiful ideal of the memories of those illustrious persons with incongruous features, and to sully the imaginative purity of their classical works with gross and trivial recollections. The least weighty objection to heterogeneous details, is that they are mainly superfluous, and therefore an incumbrance.

But you will perhaps accuse me of refining too much; and it is, I own, comparatively of little importance, while we are engaged in reading the *Iliad*, the *Eneid*, the tragedies of *Othello* and *King Lear*, whether the authors of these poems were good or bad men; whether they lived happily or miserably. Should a thought of the kind cross our minds, there would be no doubt, if irresistible external evidence did not decide the question unfavourably, that men of such transcendent genius were both good and happy: and if, unfortunately, it had been on record that they were otherwise, sympathy with the fate of their fictitious personages would banish the unwelcome truth whenever it obtruded itself, so that it would but slightly disturb our pleasure. Far otherwise is it with that class of poets, the principal charm of whose writings depends upon the familiar knowledge which they convey of the personal feelings of their authors. This is eminently the case with the effusions of Burns;—in the small quantity of narrative that he has given, he himself bears no inconsiderable part, and he has produced no drama. Neither the subjects of his poems, nor his manner of handling them, allow us long to forget their author. On the basis of his own character Burns has reared a poetic one, which with more or less distinctness presents itself to view in almost every part of his earlier, and, in my estimation, his most valuable verses. This poetic fabric, dug out of the quarry of genuine humanity, is airy and spiritual:—and though

the materials, in some parts, are coarse, and the disposition is often fantastic and irregular, yet the whole is agreeable and strikingly attractive. Plague, then, upon your remorseless hunters after matter of fact (who, after all, rank among the blindest of human beings) when they would convince you that the foundations of this admirable edifice are hollow; and that its frame is unsound! Granting that all which has been raked up to the prejudice of Burns were literally true; and that it added, which it does not, to our better understanding of human nature and human life (for that genius is not incompatible with vice, and that vice leads to misery—the more acute from the sensibilities which are the elements of genius—we needed not those communications to inform us) how poor would have been the compensation for the deduction made, by this extrinsic knowledge, from the intrinsic efficacy of his poetry—to please, and to instruct!

In illustration of this sentiment, permit me to remind you that it is the privilege of poetic genius to catch, under certain restrictions of which perhaps at the time of its being exerted it is but dimly conscious, a spirit of pleasure wherever it can be found,—in the walks of nature, and in the business of men.—The poet, trusting to primary instincts, luxuriates among the felicities of love and wine, and is enraptured while he describes the fairer aspects of war: nor does he shrink from the company of the passion of love though immoderate—from convivial pleasure though intemperate—nor from the presence of war though savage, and recognised as the hand-maid of desolation. Frequently and admirably has Burns given way to these impulses of nature; both with reference to himself and in describing the condition of others. Who, but some impenetrable dunce or narrow-minded puritan in works of art, ever read without delight the picture which he has drawn of the convivial exaltation of the rustic adventurer, Tam o' Shanter? The poet fears not to tell the reader in the

outset that his hero was a desperate and sottish drunkard, whose excesses were frequent as his opportunities. This reprobate sits down to his cups, while the storm is roaring, and heaven and earth are in confusion;—the night is driven on by song and tumultuous noise—laughter and jest thicken as the beverage improves upon the palate—conjugal fidelity archly bends to the service of general benevolence—selfishness is not absent, but wearing the mask of social cordiality—and, while these various elements of humanity are blended into one proud and happy composition of elated spirits, the anger of the tempest without doors only heightens and sets off the enjoyment within.—I pity him who cannot perceive that, in all this, though there was no moral purpose, there is a moral effect.

> Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
> O'er a' the *ills* of life victorious.[1]

What a lesson do these words convey of charitable indulgence for the vicious habits of the principal actor in this scene, and of those who resemble him!—Men who to the rigidly virtuous are objects almost of loathing, and whom therefore they cannot serve! The poet, penetrating the unsightly and disgusting surfaces of things, has unveiled with exquisite skill the finer ties of imagination and feeling, that often bind these beings to practices productive of so much unhappiness to themselves, and to those whom it is their duty to cherish;—and, as far as he puts the reader into possession of this intelligent sympathy, he qualifies him for exercising a salutary influence over the minds of those who are thus deplorably enslaved.

Not less successfully does Burns avail himself of his own character and situation in society, to construct out of them a poetic self,—introduced as a dramatic personage—for the purpose of inspiriting his incidents, diversifying his pictures, recommending his opinions, and giving

[1] See *Tam o' Shanter*, ll. 57, 58.—ED.

point to his sentiments. His brother can set me right if I am mistaken when I express a belief that, at the time when he wrote his story of *Death and Dr. Hornbook*, he had very rarely been intoxicated, or perhaps even much exhilarated by liquor. Yet how happily does he lead his reader into that track of sensations! and with what lively humour does he describe the disorder of his senses and the confusion of his understanding, put to test by a deliberate attempt to count the horns of the moon!

> But whether she had three or four
> He could na' tell.[1]

Behold a sudden apparition that disperses this disorder, and in a moment chills him into possession of himself! Coming upon no more important mission than the grisly phantom was charged with, what mode of introduction could have been more efficient or appropriate?

But, in those early poems, through the veil of assumed habits and pretended qualities, enough of the real man appears to show that he was conscious of sufficient cause to dread his own passions, and to bewail his errors! We have rejected as false sometimes in the letter, and of necessity as false in the spirit, many of the testimonies that others have borne against him; but, by his own hand —in words the import of which cannot be mistaken —it has been recorded that the order of his life but faintly corresponded with the clearness of his views. It is probable that he would have proved a still greater poet if, by strength of reason, he could have controlled the propensities which his sensibility engendered; but he would have been a poet of a different class: and certain it is, had that desirable restraint been early established, many peculiar beauties which enrich his verses could never have existed, and many accessary influences, which contribute greatly to their effect, would have been wanting. For instance, the momentous truth of the passage already quoted, "One point must still be

[1] See *Death and Dr. Hornbook*, ll. 23, 24.—ED.

greatly dark," etc., could not possibly have been conveyed with such pathetic force by any poet that ever lived, speaking in his own voice; unless it were felt that, like Burns, he was a man who preached from the text of his own errors; and whose wisdom, beautiful as a flower that might have risen from seed sown from above, was in fact a scion from the root of personal suffering. Whom did the poet intend should be thought of as occupying that grave over which, after modestly setting forth the moral discernment and warm affections of its "poor inhabitant," it is supposed to be inscribed that

> Thoughtless follies laid him low,
> And stain'd his name.[1]

Who but himself,—himself anticipating the too probable termination of his own course? Here is a sincere and solemn avowal—a public declaration *from his own will* —a confession at once devout, poetical, and human—a history in the shape of a prophecy! What more was required of the biographer than to have put his seal to the writing, testifying that the foreboding had been realised, and that the record was authentic?—Lastingly is it to be regretted in respect to this memorable being, that inconsiderate intrusion has not left us at liberty to enjoy his mirth, or his love; his wisdom or his wit; without an admixture of useless, irksome, and painful details, that take from his poems so much of that right —which, with all his carelessness, and frequent breaches of self-respect, he was not negligent to maintain for them —the right of imparting solid instruction through the medium of unalloyed pleasure.

You will have noticed that my observations have hitherto been confined to Dr. Currie's book: if, by fraternal piety, the poison can be sucked out of this wound, those inflicted by meaner hands may be safely left to heal of themselves. Of the other writers who have given their names, only one lays claim to even a

[1] See *A Bard's Epitaph*, ll. 23, 24.—ED.

slight acquaintance with the author, whose moral character they take upon them publicly to anatomise. The *Edinburgh* reviewer—and him I single out because the author of the vindication of Burns has treated his offences with comparative indulgence, to which he has no claim, and which, from whatever cause it might arise, has interfered with the dispensation of justice—the *Edinburgh* reviewer thus writes:[1] "The *leading vice* in Burns's character, and the *cardinal deformity*, indeed, of ALL his productions, was his contempt, or affectation of contempt, for prudence, decency, and regularity, and his admiration of thoughtlessness, oddity, and vehement sensibility: his belief, in short, in the dispensing power of genius and social feeling in all matters of morality and common sense;" adding, that these vices and erroneous notions "have communicated to a great part of his productions a character of immorality at once contemptible and hateful." We are afterwards told, that he is *perpetually* making a parade of his thoughtlessness, inflammability, and imprudence; and, in the next paragraph, that he is *perpetually* doing something else; *i.e.* "boasting of his own independence."—Marvellous address in the commission of faults! not less than Cæsar showed in the management of business; who, it is said, could dictate to three secretaries upon three several affairs, at one and the same moment! But, to be serious. When a man, self-elected into the office of a public judge of the literature and life of his contemporaries, can have the audacity to go these lengths in framing a summary of the contents of volumes that are scattered over every quarter in the globe, and extant in almost every cottage of Scotland, to give the lie to his labours; we must not wonder if, in the plenitude of his concern for the interests of abstract morality, the infatuated slanderer should have found no obstacle to prevent him from insinuating

[1] From Mr. Peterkin's pamphlet, who vouches for the accuracy of his citations; omitting, however, to apologise for their length. —W. W.

that the poet, whose writings are to this degree stained and disfigured, was "one of the sons of fancy and of song, who spend in vain superfluities the money that belongs of right to the pale industrious tradesman and his famishing infants; and who rave about friendship and philosophy in a tavern, while their wives' hearts," etc. etc.

It is notorious that this persevering Aristarch,[1] as often as a work of original genius comes before him, avails himself of that opportunity to re-proclaim to the world the narrow range of his own comprehension. The happy self-complacency, the unsuspecting vain-glory, and the cordial *bonhommie*, with which this part of his duty is performed, do not leave him free to complain of being hardly dealt with if any one should declare the truth, by pronouncing much of the foregoing attack upon the intellectual and moral character of Burns, to be the trespass (for reasons that will shortly appear, it cannot be called the venial trespass) of a mind obtuse, superficial, and inept. What portion of malignity such a mind is susceptible of, the judicious admirers of the poet, and the discerning friends of the man, will not trouble themselves to enquire; but they will wish that this evil principle had possessed more sway than they are at liberty to assign to it; the offender's condition would not then have been so hopeless. For malignity *selects* its diet; but where is to be found the nourishment from which vanity will revolt? Malignity may be appeased by triumphs real or supposed, and will then sleep, or yield its place to a repentance producing dispositions of good will, and

[1] A friend, who chances to be present while the author is correcting the proof sheets, observes that Aristarchus is libelled by this application of his name, and advises that "Zoilus" should be substituted. The question lies between spite and presumption; and it is not easy to decide upon a case where the claims of each party are so strong: but the name of Aristarch, who, simple man! would allow no verse to pass for Homer's which he did not approve of, is retained, for reasons that will be deemed cogent.—W. W.

desires to make amends for past injury; but vanity is restless, reckless, intractable, unappeasable, insatiable. Fortunate is it for the world when this spirit incites only to actions that meet with an adequate punishment in derision; such, as in a scheme of poetical justice, would be aptly requited by assigning to the agents, when they quit this lower world, a station in that not uncomfortable limbo—the Paradise of Fools! But, assuredly, we shall have here another proof that ridicule is not the test of truth, if it prevent us from perceiving, that *depravity* has no ally more active, more inveterate, nor, from the difficulty of divining to what kind and degree of extravagance it may prompt, more pernicious than self-conceit. Where this alliance is too obvious to be disputed, the culprit ought not to be allowed the benefit of contempt—as a shelter from detestation; much less should he be permitted to plead, in excuse for his transgressions, that especial malevolence had little or no part in them. It is not recorded, that the ancient, who set fire to the temple of Diana, had a particular dislike to the goddess of chastity, or held idolatry in abhorrence. He was a fool, an egregious fool, but not the less, on that account, a most odious monster. The tyrant who is described as having rattled his chariot along a bridge of brass over the heads of his subjects, was, no doubt, inwardly laughed at; but what if this mock Jupiter, not satisfied with an empty noise of his own making, had amused himself with throwing fire-brands upon the house-tops, as a substitute for lightning; and, from his elevation, had hurled stones upon the heads of his people, to show that he was a master of the destructive bolt, as well as of the harmless voice of the thunder!—The lovers of all that is honourable to humanity have recently had occasion to rejoice over the downfall of an intoxicated despot, whose vagaries furnish more solid materials by which the philosopher will exemplify how strict is the connection between the ludicrously, and the terribly fantastic. We know, also,

that Robespierre was one of the vainest men that the most vain country upon earth has produced;—and from this passion, and from that cowardice which naturally connects itself with it, flowed the horrors of his administration. It is a descent, which I fear you will scarcely pardon, to compare these redoubtable enemies of mankind with the anonymous conductor of a perishable publication. But the moving spirit is the same in them all; and, as far as difference of circumstances, and disparity of powers, will allow, manifests itself in the same way; by professions of reverence for truth, and concern for duty—carried to the giddiest heights of ostentation, while practice seems to have no other reliance than on the omnipotence of falsehood.

The transition from a vindication of Robert Burns to these hints for a picture of the intellectual deformity of one who has grossly outraged his memory, is too natural to require an apology: but I feel, sir, that I stand in need of indulgence for having detained you so long. Let me beg that you would impart to any judicious friends of the poet as much of the contents of these pages as you think will be serviceable to the cause; but do not give publicity to any *portion* of them, unless it be thought probable that an open circulation of the whole may be useful.[1] The subject is delicate, and some of the opinions are of a kind, which, if torn away from the trunk that supports them, will be apt to wither, and, in that state, to contract poisonous qualities; like the branches of the yew, which, while united by a living spirit to their native tree, are neither noxious, nor without beauty; but, being dissevered and cast upon the ground, become deadly to the cattle that incautiously feed upon them.

To Mr. Gilbert Burns, especially, let my sentiments be conveyed, with my sincere respects, and best wishes

[1] It was deemed that it would be so, and the letter is published accordingly.—W. W.

for the success of his praise-worthy enterprise. And if, through modest apprehension, he should doubt of his own ability to do justice to his brother's memory, let him take encouragement from the assurance that the most odious part of the charges owed its credit to the silence of those who were deemed best entitled to speak; and who, it was thought, would not have been mute, had they believed that they could speak beneficially. Moreover, it may be relied on as a general truth, which will not escape his recollection, that tasks of this kind are not so arduous as, to those who are tenderly concerned in their issue, they may at first appear to be; for, if the many be hasty to condemn, there is a reaction of generosity which stimulates them—when forcibly summoned—to redress the wrong; and, for the sensible part of mankind, *they* are neither dull to understand, nor slow to make allowance for, the aberrations of men, whose intellectual powers do honour to their species.

I am, dear Sir, respectfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, *January*, 1816.

XVII

TWO ADDRESSES TO THE FREEHOLDERS OF WESTMORLAND

ADVERTISEMENT

THE Author thinks it proper to advise his Reader, that he alone is responsible for the sentiments and opinions expressed in these sheets. Gladly would he have availed himself of the judgment of others, if that benefit could have been had without subjecting the Persons consulted to the possibility of blame, for having sanctioned any view of the topics under consideration, which, either from its erroneousness might deserve, or from Party feelings or other causes might incur, censure.

The matter comprised in these pages was intended to compose a succession of Addresses to be printed in the *Kendal Chronicle*, and a part of the first was published through that channel. The intention was dropped for reasons well known. It is now mentioned in order to account for the disproportion in the length of the two Addresses, and an arrangement of matter, in some places, different from what would otherwise have been chosen. A portion also has appeared in the *Carlisle Patriot*.

It is of little importance to add, that this Publication has been delayed by unavoidable engagements of the Printer.

March 26, 1818.

TO THE READER

THE new Candidate[1] has appeared amongst us, and concluded, for the present, his labours in the County. They require no further notice here than an expression of thanks for the success with which he has co-operated with the Author of these pages to demonstrate, by the whole of his itinerant proceedings, that the vital principle of the Opposition ostensibly headed by him, is at enmity with the bonds by which society is held together, and Government maintained.

April 4, 1818.

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[1] The reference is to Mr. Brougham, afterwards the Lord Chancellor Brougham.—ED.

TO THE FREEHOLDERS OF WESTMORLAND

GENTLEMEN,

Two Months have elapsed since warning was given of an intention to oppose the present Representatives of the County of Westmorland, at the ensuing Election; yet, till so late a period as the 26th of January, no avowal of such intention appeared from any quarter entitling it to consideration. For, as to the Body of Men, calling itself the London Committee, there is not, up to this hour I believe, any public evidence even of its existence, except certain notices signed by two obscure individuals. But, in the minds of those naturally interested in the welfare of the County, a ferment was excited by various devices; inflammatory addresses were busily circulated; men, laying claim to the flattering character of Reformers of abuses, became active; and, as this stir did not die away, they who foresaw its bearings and tendencies, were desirous that, if there were any just grounds for discontent, the same should be openly declared, by persons whose characters and situations in life would be a pledge for their having proceeded upon mature deliberation. At length, a set of resolutions have appeared, from a Meeting of dissatisfied Freeholders, holden in a Town, which, if not the principal in point of rank, is the most populous, opulent, and weighty, in the County. Among those who composed this Meeting, the first visible authentic Body which the Opposition has produced, are to be found persons answering to the description above given—men

from whom might have been expected, in the exposition of their complaints, sound sense as to the nature of the grievances, and rational views as to the mode of removing them — Have such expectations, if entertained, been fulfilled?

The first Resolution unanimously agreed upon by this Meeting, is couched in these words: "It is impossible for us, as Freeholders, to submit any longer to a single Family, however respectable, naming both Members for the County." What if this leading article had been thus expressed? "That it is injurious to the interests, and derogatory to the dignity, of the County of Westmorland, that both its Representatives should be brought into Parliament, by the influence of one Family." Words to this effect would surely have given the sense of the Resolution, as proceeding from men of cool reflection; and offered nakedly to the consideration of minds which, it was desired, should be kept in a similar state. But we cannot "*submit* any longer"—if the intention was to mislead and irritate, such language was well adapted for the purpose; but it ill accords with the spirit of the next Resolution, which affirms, that the Meeting is wholly unconnected with any political Party; and, thus disclaiming indirectly those passions and prejudices that are apt to fasten upon political partisans, implicitly promises, that the opinions of the Meeting shall be conveyed in terms suitable to such disavowal. Did the persons in question imagine themselves in a state of degradation? On their own word we must believe they did; and no one could object to their employing, among each other, such language as gave vent to feelings proceeding from that impression, in a way that gratified themselves. But, by *publishing* their Resolutions, they shew that they are not communing for the sake of mutual sympathy, but to induce others to participate a sentiment which probably they are strangers to. We *submit* to the law, and to those who are placed in authority over us, while in the legitimate exercise of their functions—

we *submit* to the decrees of Providence, because they are not to be resisted—a coward *submits* to be insulted—a pusillanimous wretch to be despised—and a knave, if detected, must submit to be scouted—a slave submits to his Taskmaster; but, the Freeholders of Westmorland, cannot, *in reason*, be said to submit to the House of Lowther naming their Representatives, unless it can be proved that those Representatives have been thrust upon them by an unjustifiable agency; and that they owe their seats, not to the free suffrages and frank consent of their Constituents, but to unfair means, whether in the shape of seduction or threat. If there be an indignity on one side, there must have been a wrong done on the other; and, to make out this point, it ought to have been shewn, that some other Person, qualified by his property, his education, his rank, and character, had stood forth and offered himself to represent you, Freeholders of Westmorland, in Parliament; and that, in this attempt, he had been crushed by the power of a single Family, careless of the mode in which that power was exercised. I appeal to those who have had an opportunity of being acquainted with the Noble Lord who is at the head of that Family, whether they are of opinion, that any consideration of his own interest or importance in the State, would have induced him to oppose *such* a Candidate, provided there was reason for believing that the unabused sense of the County was with him. If indeed a Candidate supposed to be so favoured by the County, had declared himself an enemy to the general measures of Administration for some years past, those measures have depended on principles of conduct of such vast importance, that the Noble Lord must needs have endeavoured, as far as prudence authorised, to frustrate an attempt, which, in conscience, he could not approve.

I affirm, then, that, as there was no wrong, there is no indignity—the present Members owe their high situation to circumstances, local and national. They are there *because no one else has presented himself*, or, for

some years back, has been likely to present himself, with pretensions, the reasonableness of which could enter into competition with their's. This is, in some points of view, a misfortune, but it is the fact; and no class of men regret it more than the independent and judicious adherents of the House of Lowther: Men who are happy and proud to rally round the Nobleman who is the head of that House, in defence of rational liberty: Men who know that he has proved himself a faithful guardian to the several orders of the State—that he is a tried enemy to dangerous innovations—a condemner of fantastic theories—one who understands mankind, and knows the heights and levels of human nature, by which the course of the streams of social action is determined—a Lover of the People, but one who despises, as far as relates to his own practice; and deplores, in respect to that of others, the shows, and pretences, and all the false arts by which the plaudits of the multitude are won, and the people flattered to the common ruin of themselves and their deceivers.

But after all, let us soberly enquire to what extent it is really an evil that two persons, so nearly connected in blood, should represent this County. And first looking at the matter *locally*, what *is* that portion of England known by the name of the County of Westmorland? A County which indeed the natives of it love, and are justly proud of; a region famous for the production of shrewd, intelligent, brave, active, honest, enterprising men:—but it covers no very large space on the map; the soil is in general barren, the country poor accordingly, and of necessity thinly inhabited. There are in England single Towns, even of a third or fourth rate importance, that contain a larger population than is included within the limits of Westmorland, from the foot of Wrynose to the sides of Stainmoor, and from the banks of the Kent to those of the Emont. Is it, then, to be wondered at, considering the antiquity of the House of Lowther, that circumstances should have raised it to the elevation

which it holds in a district so thinly peopled, neither rich in the products of Agriculture, nor in the materials of Commerce, and where it is impossible that any considerable number of Country Gentlemen of large, or as our ancestors expressed themselves of notable estate, can co-exist? It must unavoidably happen therefore that, at all times, there will be few persons, in such a County, furnished with the stable requisites of property, rank, family, and personal fitness, that shall point them out for such an office, and *dispose them to covet it*, by insuring that degree of public confidence which will make them independent, comfortable, and happy, in discharging the duties which it imposes. This small number will, at particular periods, be liable to be reduced; that this *has* been the case is apparent upon retrospect; and that the number is not large at present, may be inferred from the difficulty with which a third Candidate has been found; and from the insignificant station which the Individual, who has at length obeyed the call of the discontented, holds in the County.

With these local circumstances *general* considerations have powerfully co-operated, to place the representation of Westmorland where it now is; and to this second division of the subject I particularly request your attention, Gentlemen, as reflecting Patriots.

Looking up to the Government with respectful attachment, we all acknowledge that power must be controlled and checked, or it will be abused; hence the desirableness of a vigorous opposition in the House of Commons; and hence a wish, grounded upon a conviction of general expediency, that the opposition to ministry, whose head and chief seat of action are in Parliament, should be efficaciously diffused through all parts of the Country. On this principle the two grand divisions of Party, under our free Government, are founded. Conscience regulated by expediency, is the basis; honour, binding men to each other in spite of temptation, is the corner-stone; and the superstructure is friendship, protecting kindness,

gratitude, and all the moral sentiments by which self-interest is liberalised. Such is Party, looked at on the favourable side. Cogent *moral* inducements, therefore, exist for the prevalence of two powerful bodies in the practice of the State, spreading their influence and interests throughout the country; and, on *political* considerations, it is desirable that the strength of each should bear such proportion to that of the other, that, while Ministry are able to carry into effect measures not palpably injurious, the vigilance of Opposition may turn to account, being backed by power at all times sufficient to awe, but never, (were that possible) except when supported by manifest reason, to intimidate.

Such apportioning of the strength of the two Parties *has* existed; such a degree of power the Opposition formerly possessed; and if they have lost that salutary power, if they are dwindled and divided, they must ascribe it to their own errors. They are weak because they have been unwise: they are brought low, because when they had solid and high ground to stand upon, they took a flight into the air. To have hoped too ardently of human nature, as they did at the commencement of the French Revolution, was no dishonour to them as men; but *politicians* cannot be allowed to plead temptations of fancy, or impulses of feeling, in exculpation of mistakes in judgment. Grant, however, to the enthusiasm of Philanthropy as much indulgence as it may call for, it is still extraordinary that, in the minds of English Statesmen and Legislators, the naked absurdity of the means did not raise a doubt as to the attainableness of the end. Mr. Fox, captivated by the vanities of a system founded upon abstract rights, chaunted his expectations in the House of Parliament; and too many of his Friends partook of the illusion. The most sagacious Politician of his age broke out in an opposite strain. Time has verified his predictions; the books remain in which his principles of foreknowledge were laid down; but, as the Author became afterwards a

Pensioner of State, thousands, in this country of free opinions, persist in asserting that his divination was guess-work, and that conscience had no part in urging him to speak. That warning voice proved vain; the Party from whom he separated, proceeded—confiding in splendid oratorical talents and ardent feelings rashly wedded to novel expectations, when common sense, uninquisitive experience, and a modest reliance on old habits of judgment, when either these, or a philosophic penetration, were the only qualities that could have served them.

How many private Individuals, at that period, were kept in a rational course by circumstances, supplying restraints which their own understandings would not have furnished! Through what fatality it happens, that Bodies of Men are so slow to profit, in a similar way, by circumstances affecting their prosperity, the Opposition seem never to have enquired. They could not avoid observing, that the Holders of Property throughout the country, being mostly panic-stricken by the proceedings in France, turned instinctively against the admirers of the new system;—and, as security for property is the very basis of civil society, how was it possible but that reflecting men, who perceived this truth, should mistrust those Representatives of the People, who could not have acted less prudently, had they been utterly unconscious of it! But they had committed themselves and did not retract; either from unabating devotion to their cause, or from false honour, and that self-injuring consistency, the favourite sister of obstinacy, which the mixed conscience of mankind is but too apt to produce. Meanwhile the tactics of Parliament must continue in exercise on some system or other; their adversaries were to be annoyed at any rate; and so intent were they upon this, that, in proportion as the entrenchments of Ministry strengthened, the assaults of Opposition became more careless and desperate.

While the war of words and opinions was going for-

ward in this country, Europe was deluged with blood. They in whose hands power was vested among us, in course of time, lost ground in public opinion, through the failure of their efforts. Parties were broken and re-composed; but Men who are brought together less by principle than by events, cannot cordially co-operate, or remain long united. The opponents of the war, in this middle stage and desponding state of it, were not popular; and afterwards, when the success of the enemy made the majority of the Nation feel, that Peace dictated by him could not be lasting, and they were bent on persevering in the struggle, the Party of Opposition persisted in a course of action which, as their countenance of the doctrine of the rights of man, had brought their understandings into disrepute, cast suspicion on the soundness of their patriotic affections. Their passions made them blind to the differences between a state of peace and war, (above all such a war!) as prescribing rules for their own conduct. They were ignorant, or never bore in mind, that a species of hostility which, had there been no foreign enemy to resist, might have proved useful and honourable, became equally pernicious and disgraceful, when a formidable foe threatened us with destruction.

I appeal to impartial recollection, whether, during the course of the late awful struggle, and in the latter stages of it especially, the antagonists of Ministers, in the two Houses of Parliament, did not, for the most part, conduct themselves more like allies to a military despot, who was attempting to enslave the world, and to whom their own country was an object of paramount hatred, than like honest Englishmen, who had breathed the air of liberty from their cradles. If any state of things could supply them with motives for acting in that manner, they must abide by the consequences. They must reconcile themselves as well as they can to dislike and to disesteem, the unavoidable results of behaviour so unnatural. Peace has indeed come; but do they

who deprecated the continuance of the war, and clamoured for its close, on any terms, rejoice heartily in a triumph by which their prophecies were belied? Did they lend their voices to swell the hymn of transport, that resounded through our Land, when the arch-enemy was overthrown? Are they pleased that inheritances have been restored, and that legitimate governments have been re-established, on the Continent? And do they grieve when those re-established governments act unworthily of the favour which Providence has shown them? Do not too many rather secretly congratulate themselves on every proof of imbecility or misconduct there exhibited; and endeavour that attention shall be exclusively fixed on those melancholy facts, as if they were the only fruits of a triumph, to which we Britons owe, that we are a fearless, undishonoured, and rapidly improving people, and the nations of the Continent owe their very existence as self-governed communities?

The Party of Opposition, or what remains of it, has much to repent of; many humiliating reflections must pass through the minds of those who compose it, and they must learn the hard lesson to be thankful for them as a discipline indispensable to their amendment. Thus only can they furnish a sufficient nucleus for the formation of a new Body; nor can there be any hope of such Body being adequate to its appropriate service, and of its possessing that portion of good opinion which shall entitle it to the respect of its antagonists, unless it live and act, for a length of time, under a distinct conception of the kind and degree of hostility to the executive government, which is fairly warrantable. The Party must cease indiscriminately to court the discontented, and to league itself with Men who are athirst for innovation, to a point which leaves it doubtful, whether an Opposition, that is willing to co-operate with such Agitators, loves as it ought to do, and becomingly venerates, the happy and glorious Constitution, in Church and State, which we have inherited from our Ancestors.

Till not a doubt can be left that this indispensable change has been effected, Freeholders of Westmorland! you will remain—but to *exhort* is not my present business—I was retracing the history of the influence of one Family, and have shewn that much of it depends upon that steady support given by them to Government, during a long and arduous struggle, and upon the general course of their public conduct, which has secured your approbation and won for them your confidence. Let us now candidly ask what practical evil has arisen from this preponderance. Is it not obvious, that it is justified by the causes that have produced it? As far as it concerns the general well-being of the Kingdom, it would be easy to shew, that if the democratic activities of the great Towns and of the manufacturing Districts, were not counteracted by the sedentary power of large estates, continued from generation to generation in particular families, it would be scarcely possible that the Laws and Constitution of the Country could sustain the shocks which they would be subject to. And as to our own County, *that* Man must be strangely prejudiced, who does not perceive how desirable it is, that some powerful Individual should be attached to it; who, by his influence with Government, may facilitate the execution of any plan tending, with due concern for *general* welfare, to the especial benefit of Westmorland. The influence of the House of Lowther is, we acknowledge, great; but has a case been made out, that this influence has been abused? The voice of gratitude is not loud, out of delicacy to the Benefactor; but, if all who know were at liberty to speak, to the measure of their wishes, the services which have been rendered by the House of Lowther to Westmorland, its Natives, and Inhabitants, would be proclaimed in a manner that would confound detraction.—Yet the Kendal Committee of the 26th of January—without troubling themselves to inquire how far this preponderance is a reasonable thing, and what have been its real and practical effects—are indignant;

their blood is roused; "and they are determined to address their Brother Freeholders, and call upon them to recover the exercise of the elective Franchise, which has been withheld from them for half a century."—*Withheld* from them! Suppose these Champions, in this their first declaration of hostility, had said, "to recover the elective Franchise *which we have suffered to lie dormant.*" But no!—Who would take blame to himself, when, by so doing, he is likely to break the force of the indignation, which, whether deserved or not, he hopes to heap upon his adversary? This is politic—but does it become professing men? Does it suit those who set forward with a proclamation, that they are select spirits, free from Party ties; and, of course, superior to those artifices and misrepresentations—to those groundless or immoderate aversions—which men who act in parties find it so difficult to keep clear of?

What degree of discernment and consistency, an assembly of persons, who begin their labours with such professions and publish such intentions, have shewn, by making choice of the Individual whom they have recommended, as eminently entitled to their confidence and qualified to assist them in attaining their end, may become the fit subject of a future enquiry.

SECOND ADDRESS

GENTLEMEN,

Much of my former Address, originated in deference to that sense of right, which is inseparable from the minds of enlightened Patriots. Passing from local considerations, I wrote under a belief that, whatever personal or family leanings might prevail among you, you would be moved by a wish to see the supporters of his Majesty's Ministers and their opponents—possessed, relatively to each other, of that degree of strength which

might render both parties, in their several capacities, most serviceable to the State. I noticed, that this just proportion of strength no longer remained; and shewed, that the Opposition had caused it to be destroyed by holding, from the beginning of the French Revolution, such a course as introduced in Parliament, discord among themselves; deprived them, in that House and elsewhere, of the respect which from their Adversaries they had been accustomed to command; turned indifferent persons into enemies; and alienated, throughout the Island, the affections of thousands who had been proud to unite with them. This weakness and degradation, deplored by all true Friends of the Commonweal, was sufficiently accounted for, without even adverting to the fact that—when the disasters of the war had induced the Country to forgive, and, in some degree, to forget, the alarming attachment of that Party to French theories: and power, heightened by the popularity of hope and expectation, was thrown into their hands—they disgusted even bigoted adherents, by the rapacious use they made of that power;—stooping to so many offensive compromises, and committing so many faults in every department, that, a Government of Talents, if such be the fruits of talent, was proved to be the most mischievous sort of government which England had ever been troubled with. So that, whether in or out of place, an evil genius seemed to attend them!

How could all this happen? For the fundamental reason, that neither the religion, the laws, the morals, the manners, nor the literature of the country, especially as contrasted with those of France, were prized by the Leaders of the Party as they deserved. It is a notorious fact that, among their personal Friends, was scarcely to be found a single Clergyman of distinction;—so that, now to dispose of their ecclesiastical patronage in a manner that might do them credit, they were almost as ignorant as strangers landed, for the first time, in a foreign Country. This is not to be accounted for on

any supposition (since the education of men of rank naturally devolves on those members of our Universities, who choose the Church for their profession) but that of a repugnance on their part to associate with persons of grave character and decorous manners. Is the distracted remnant of the Party, now surviving, improved in that respect? The dazzling talents with which it was once distinguished have passed away; pleasure and dissipation are no longer, in that quarter, exhibited to the world in such reconcilement with business as excited dispositions to forgive what could not be approved, and a species of wonder, not sufficiently kept apart from envy, at the extraordinary gifts and powers by which the union was accomplished. This injurious conjunction no longer exists, so as to attract the eyes of the Nation. But we look in vain for signs that the opinions, habits, and feelings of the Party are tending towards a restoration of that genuine English character, by which alone the confidence of the sound part of the People can be recovered.

The public life of the Candidate who now, for the first time, solicits your suffrages, my Brother Freeholders, cannot, however, without injustice to that Party, be deemed a fair exponent of its political opinions. It has, indeed, been too tolerant with Mr. Brougham, while he was labouring to ingraft certain sour cuttings from the wild wood of ultra reform on the reverend, though somewhat decayed, stock of that tree of Whiggism, which flourished proudly under the cultivation of our Ancestors. This indulgence, and others like it, will embolden him to aim at passing himself off as the Delegate of Opposition, and the authorised pleader of their cause. But Time, that Judge from whom none but triflers appeal to conjecture, has decided upon leading principles and main events, and given the verdict against his clients. While, with a ready tongue, the Advocate of a disappointed party is filling one scale, do you, with a clear memory and apt judgment, silently throw in what

of right belongs to the other; and the result will be, that no sensible man among you, who has supported the present Members on account of their steady adherence to Ministers, can be induced to change his conduct, or be persuaded that the hour is either come, or approaching, when, for the sake of bringing the power of Opposition in this County nearer to an equality with that of Ministers, it will be his duty to vote against those Representatives in whom he has hitherto confided. No, if Mr. Brougham had not individually passed far beyond the line of that Party—if his conduct had been such that even they themselves would admit that he truly belonged to them —the exception would still lie against the general rule; and will remain till the character of men and measures materially changes, for the better, assuredly, on the one side, if not for the worse on the other. Remember what England might have been with an Administration countenancing French Doctrines at the dawn of the French Revolution, and suffering them, as it advanced, to be sown with every wind that came across the Channel! Think what was the state of Europe before the French Emperor, the apparent, and in too many respects the real, Idol of Opposition, was overthrown!

Numbers, I am aware, do not cease vehemently to maintain, that the late war was neither just nor necessary; that the ostensible and real causes of it were widely different; that it was not begun, and persisted in, for the purpose of withstanding foreign aggression, and in defence of social order: but from unprincipled ambition in the Powers of Europe, eager to seize that opportunity of augmenting their territories at the expense of distracted and enfeebled France.—Events ever-to-be-lamented do, I grant, give too much colour to those affirmations. But this was a war upon a large scale, wherein many Belligerents took part; and no one who distinctly remembers the state of Europe at its commencement will be inclined any more to question that the alleged motives had a solid foundation, because then,

or afterwards, others might mix with them, than he would doubt that the maintenance of Christianity and the reduction of the power of the Infidels were the principal motives of the Crusades, because roving Adventurers, joining in those expeditions, turned them to their own profit. Traders and hypocrites may make part of a Caravan bound to Mecca; but it does not follow that a religious observance is not the prime object of the Pilgrimage. The political fanaticism (it deserves no milder name) that pervaded the Manifesto issued by the Duke of Brunswick, on his entry into France, proves, that he and the Power whose organ he was, were swayed on their march by an ambition very different from that of territorial aggrandisement;—at least, if such ambition existed, it is plain that feelings of another kind blinded them to the means of gratifying it. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge the passion soon manifested itself, and in a quarter where it was least excusable. The seizure of Valenciennes, in the name of the Emperor of Germany, was an act of such glaring rapacity, and gave the lie so unfeelingly to all that had been professed, that the then Ministers of Great Britain, doubtless, opposed the intention with a strong remonstrance. But the dictates of magnanimity (which in such cases is but another word for high and sage policy) would have been—"this unjust act must either be abandoned, or Great Britain shall retire from a contest which, if such principles are to govern, or interfere with, the conduct of it, cannot but be calamitous." A threat to this purpose was either not given or not acted upon. *Hinc illæ clades!* From that moment the alliance of the French Loyalists with the coalesced Powers seemed to have no ground of rational patriotism to stand upon. Their professed helpers became their worst enemies; and numbers among them not only began to wish for the defeat of their false friends, but joined themselves to their fellow countrymen, of all parties, who were labouring to effect it.—But the military successes of the French, arising mainly from this want

of principle in the Confederate Powers, in course of time placed the policy and justice of the war upon a new footing. However men might differ about the necessity or reasonableness of resorting to arms in the first instance, things were brought to such a state that, among the disinterested and dispassionate, there could be but one opinion (even if nothing higher than security was aimed at) on the demand for the utmost strength of the nation being put forth in the prosecution of the war, till it should assume a more hopeful aspect.—And now it was that Ministers made ample amends for past subserviency to selfish coadjutors, and proved themselves worthy of being entrusted with the fate of Europe. While the Opposition were taking counsel from their fears, and recommending despair—while they continued to magnify without scruple the strength of the Enemy, and to expose, misrepresent, and therefore increase the weaknesses of their country, his Majesty's Ministers were not daunted, though often discouraged: they struggled up against adversity with fortitude, and persevered heroically; throwing themselves upon the honour and wisdom of the Country, and trusting for the issue to the decrees of a just PROVIDENCE:—and for this determination everlasting gratitude will attend them!

From the internal situation of France, produced by the Revolution, War with the contiguous Powers was inevitable; sooner or later the evil must have been encountered; and it was of little importance whether England took a share in it somewhat earlier than, by fallible judgments, might be deemed necessary, or not. The frankness with which the faults that were committed have been acknowledged entitles the writer to some regard, when, speaking from an intimate knowledge of the internal state of France at that time, he affirms, that the war waged against her was, in a liberal interpretation of the words, *just and necessary*. At all events our Nation viewed it in this light. A large majority of the Inhabitants of Great Britain called for the war; and they who *will* the

end *will* the means: the war being deemed necessary, taxes became indispensable for its support. Some might prefer one mode of raising them—some another; but these are minor considerations. Public men, united in bodies, must act on great principles. Mutual deference is a fundamental requisite for the composition and efficiency of a Party: for, if individual judgment is to be obtruded and insisted upon in subordinate concerns, the march of business will be perpetually obstructed. The leaders will not know whom they can depend upon, and therefore will be at a loss what to recommend, and how to act. If a public man differs from his Party in essentials, Conscience and Honour demand that he should withdraw; but if there be no such difference, it is incumbent upon him to submit his personal opinion to the general sense. He, therefore, who thought the prosecution of the war necessary, could not condemn the public Imposts; on this consequence the steady adherents of Ministers rest their claim to approbation, and advance it boldly in defiance of the outcry raised against the Government, on account of the burthens which the situation of Europe compelled it to lay upon the people.

In matters of taste, it is a process attended with little advantage, and often injurious, to compare one set of artists, or writers, with another. But, in estimating the merits of public men, especially of two Parties acting in direct opposition, it is not only expedient, but indispensable, that both should be kept constantly in sight. The truth or fallacy of French principles, and the tendency, good or bad, of the Revolution which sprang out of them; and the necessity, or non-necessity —the policy, or impolicy—of resisting by war the encroachments of republican and imperial France; these were the opposite grounds upon which each Party staked their credit: here we behold them in full contrast with each other—To whom shall the crown be given? On whom has the light fallen? and who are covered by shade and thick darkness?

The magnanimity which resolved, that for principle's sake no efforts should be spared to crush a bestial despotism, was acknowledged by every manly spirit whom Party degenerating into Faction had not vitiated. That such was the dictate of confiding *wisdom* had long been inwardly felt; and the *prudence* of the course was evinced by the triumphant issue; but to the very completeness of this triumph may be indirectly attributed no small portion of the obloquy now heaped upon those advisers through whom it was achieved. The power of Napoleon Buonaparte was overthrown—his person has disappeared from the theatre of Europe—his name has almost deserted the columns of her daily and weekly Journals—but as he has left no Successor, as there is no foreign Tyrant of sufficient importance to attract hatred by exciting fear, many honest English Patriots must either find, or set up, something at home for the employment of those affections. This is too natural to occasion surprise; thousands are so framed, that they are but languidly conscious of their love of an object, unless while they feel themselves in an active state of aversion to something which they can regard as its opposite.—Thus we see Men, who had been proud of their attachment to his Majesty's Ministers, during the awful struggle, as soon as it was over, allowing on the first temptation that proud attachment to be converted into immoderate suspicion, and a long experienced gratitude into sudden alienation.—Through this infirmity, many were betrayed into taking part with the Men whom they had heretofore despised or condemned; and assisted them in reviling their own Government for suffering, among the States of the Continent, institutions to remain which the respective nations (surely the best, if not the only judges in the case) were unwilling to part with; and for having permitted things to be done, either just and proper in themselves, or if indeed abuses, abuses of that kind which Great Britain had neither right to oppose, nor power to prevent. Not a Frenchman is in

arms in Spain! But (alas for the credit of the English Cabinet!) Ferdinand, though a lawful, appears to be a sorry King; and the Inquisition, though venerated by the People of Spain as a holy tribunal, which has spread a protecting shade over their religion for hundreds of years, is, among Protestants, an abomination! Is that, however, a reason why we should not rejoice that Spain is restored to the rank of an Independent nation; and that her resources do not continue at the disposal of a foreign Tyrant, for the annoyance of Great Britain? Prussia no longer receives decrees from the Tuileries; but nothing, we are told, is gained by this deliverance; because the Sovereign of that Country has not participated, as far as became him, a popular effervescence; and has withheld from his subjects certain privileges which they have proved themselves, to all but heated judgments, not yet qualified to receive. Now, if numbers can blame, without cause, the British Cabinet for events falling below their wishes, in cases remote from their immediate concerns, the reasonableness of their opinions may well be questioned in points where selfish passion is touched to the quick.—Yes, in spite of the outcry of such Men to the contrary, every enlightened Politician and discerning Patriot, however diffident as to what was the exact line of prudence in such arduous circumstances, will reprobate the conduct of those who were for reducing public expenditure with a precipitation that might have produced a convulsion in the State. The Habeas Corpus Act is also our own near concern; it was suspended, some think without sufficient cause; not so, however, the Persons who had the best means of ascertaining the state of the Country; for they could have been induced to have recourse to a measure, at all times so obnoxious, by nothing less than a persuasion of its expediency. "But persuasion (an Objector will say) is produced in many ways; and even that degree of it which in these matters passes for conviction, depends less upon external testimony than on the habits and

feelings of those by whom the testimony is to be weighed and decided upon. A council for the administration of affairs is far from being as favourably circumstanced as a tribunal of law; for the Party, which is to pronounce upon the case, has had to procure the evidence, the sum and quality of which must needs have been affected by previously existing prejudices, and by any bias received in the process of collecting it.—The privileges of the subject, one might think, would never be unjustifiably infringed, if it were only from considerations of self-interest; but power is apt to resort to unnecessary rigour in order to supply the deficiencies of *authority* forfeited by remissness; it is also not unfrequently exerted merely to shew that it is possessed; to shew this to others while power is a novelty, and when it has long ceased to be so, to prove it to ourselves. Impatience of mind, moreover, puts men upon the use of strong and coarse tools, when those of lighter make and finer edge, with due care, might execute the work much better. Above all, timidity flies to extremes;—if the elements were at our command, how often would an inundation be called for, when a fire-engine would have proved equal to the service!—Much more might be urged in this strain, and similar suggestions are all that the question will admit of; for to suppose a gross appetite of tyranny in Government, would be an insult to the reader's understanding. Happily for the Inhabitants of Westmorland, as no dispositions existing among them could furnish a motive for this restrictive measure, so they will not be sorry that their remoteness from scenes of public confusion, has placed them where they will be slow to give an unqualified opinion upon its merits. Yet it will not escape their discernment, that, if doubts might have been entertained whether the ignorant and distressed multitude, in other parts of the Island, were actually brought to a state that justified the suspension of this law, such doubts must have been weakened, if not wholly removed, by the subsequent behaviour of

those in the upper ranks of society, who, in order to arraign the Government, and denounce the laws, have seized every opportunity of palliating sedition, if not of exculpating treason. O far better to employ bad men in the detection of foul conspiracies, than to excuse and shelter—(would that I were allowed to confine myself to these words)—than to reward and honour—every one that can contrive to make himself conspicuous by courses which, wherever they are not branded with infamy, find the national character in a state of degradation, ominous (if it should spread) for the existence of all that ought to be dear to Englishmen.

But there are points of domestic policy in which his Majesty's Ministers, not appearing in counterview with their Opponents, are seen less to their honour. Speaking as an Individual, and knowing that here I differ from many Freeholders with whom it is an honour to co-operate in the present struggle, I must express my disapprobation of the patronage afforded by several persons in power, to a Society by which is virtually propagated the notion that Priesthood, and of course our own inestimable Church Establishment, is superfluous. I condemn their sanction (and this attaches to the whole body) of the malevolent and senseless abuse heaped upon the Clergy, in the matter of tythes, through the medium of papers circulated by the Agricultural Board. I deprecate the course which some among them take in the Catholic Question, as unconstitutional; and deplore the want of discernment evinced by men who persuade themselves that the discontents prevalent in Ireland will be either removed or abated by such concession. With these errors and weaknesses the Members of the Administration (as appears to me) may be justly reproached; and a still heavier charge will lie against them, if the correction of the Poor Laws be longer deferred. May they exhibit, in treating this momentous subject, a tenderness of undeceived humanity on the one side, and a sternness of enlightened state-policy on the

other! Thus, and thus only, can be checked immediately, and in due course of time perhaps removed, an evil by which one claim and title is set in array against another, in a manner, and to an extent, that threatens utter subversion to the ancient frame of society.

This is the heaviest burthen that now lies upon England!—Here is a necessity for reform which, as it cannot prosper unless it begin from the Government and the upper ranks in society, has no attraction for demagogues and mob-exciting patriots. They understand their game; and, as if the people could in no way be so effectually benefited as by rendering their Government suspected, they declaim against taxes; and, by their clamours for reduction of public expenditure, drown the counter-suggestions from the "still small voice" of moderation appealing to circumstances. "Cry aloud, and spare not!—Retrench and lop off!" and so they proceeded with the huzza of the multitude at their heels, till they had produced an extreme embarrassment in the Government, and instant distress and misery among the People.

One of the most importunate of that class of Economists which Parliament contained, now Gentlemen, solicits the honour of representing you; and merit may perhaps be claimed for him for his exertions upon that occasion. If it be praise-worthy to have contributed to cast shoals of our deserving countrymen adrift, without regard to their past services, that praise cannot be denied him; if it be commendable to have availed himself of inordinate momentary passion to carry measures whereby the general weal was sacrificed, whether designedly for the attainment of popularity, or in the self-applauding sincerity of a heated mind, that praise is due to Mr. Brougham and his coadjutors. But, to the judicious Freeholders of Westmorland, whether Gentry or Yeomanry, rich or poor, he will in vain adduce this, or any other part of the recent conduct of Opposition, as a motive for strengthening their interests amongst us. No,

Freeholders, we must wait; assuring them that they shall have a reasonable portion of our support as soon as they have proved that they deserve it!

Till that time comes, it will not grieve us that this County should supply two Representatives to uphold the Servants of the Crown, even if both should continue, through unavoidable circumstances, to issue from one Family amongst us. Till that change takes place, we will treat with scorn the senseless outcry for the recovery of an independence which has never been lost. We are, have been, and will remain, independent; and the host of men, respectable on every account, who have publicly avowed their desire to maintain our present Representatives in their seats, deem it insolence to assert the contrary. They are independent in every rational sense of the word; acknowledging, however, that they rest upon a principle, and are incorporated with an interest; and this they regard as a proof that their affections are sane, and their understandings superior to illusion. But in certain vocabularies liberty is synonymous with license; and to be free, as explained by some, is to live and act without restraint. In like manner, independence, according to the meaning of their interpretation, is the explosive energy of conceit—making blind havoc with expediency. It is a presumptuous spirit at war with all the passive worth of mankind. The independence which they boast of despises habit, and time-honoured forms of subordination; it consists in breaking old ties upon new temptations; in casting off the modest garb of private obligation to strut about in the glittering armour of public virtue; in sacrificing, with jacobinical infatuation, the near to the remote, and preferring, to what has been known and tried, that which has no distinct existence, even in imagination; in renouncing, with voluble tongue and vain heart, every thing intricate in motive, and mixed in quality, in a downright passion of love for absolute, unapproachable patriotism! In short, the independence these Reformers bawl for is the

worthy precursor of the liberty they adore ;—making her first essay by starting out of the course for the pleasure of falling into the ditch ; and asserting her heaven-born vigour by soaring *above* the level of humanity in profession, that it may more conspicuously appear how far she can fall *below* it in practice.

To this spurious independence the Friends of our present Representatives lay no claim. They assert in the face of the world that those Representatives hold their seats by free election.—*That* has placed them there ; and why should we wish to change what we do not disapprove of—that which could not have been without our approbation ? But this County has not for a long time been disturbed by electioneering contests.—Is there no species of choice, then, but that which is accompanied with commotion and clamour ? Do silent acquiescence and deliberate consent pass for nothing ? Being contented, what could we seek for more ? Being satisfied, why should we stir for stirring's sake ? Uproar and disorder, even these we could tolerate on a justifying occasion ; but it is no sign of prudence to court them unnecessarily, nor of temper to invite them wantonly. He who resorts to substantial unruliness for the redress of imaginary grievances, provokes certain mischief ; and often, in the end, produces calamity which would excite little compassion, could it be confined to its original author.

Let those who think that they are degraded proclaim their own dishonour. *They* choose to regard themselves as shackled Conscripts :—*we* know that we are self-equipped Volunteers. If they cannot be easy without branding themselves as slaves, we would endeavour to dissuade them from such abuse of their free-agency ; but if they persist, we cannot interfere with their humour : only do not let them apply the iron to our foreheads ! They cry out that they have been in a lethargy ; why do they not add that they would have been asleep to this hour, if they had not been roused, in their vales and on

their moors, by an officious and impertinent call from the dirty alleys and obscure courts of the Metropolis?

If there be any honour in England, the composition of the Lowther Party must be loyal and honourable. Its adversaries have admitted that a large majority, they might have added nearly the whole, of the leading Gentry; that the Magistracy—all but a single Individual; that the Clergy and the Members of the other liberal Professions—with very few exceptions; and a vast body of Tradesmen and Manufacturers, and of substantial Yeomen, the honest Grey-coats of Westmorland, have already declared themselves of one mind upon this appeal to their judgments. Looking to a distance, they see the worth and opulence, the weight of character, and the dignity and respectability of station, that distinguish the numerous list of Freeholders resident in London, who have jointly and publicly testified their satisfaction in the conduct of our present Representatives. The discontented see and know these things; and are well aware also that the Lowthers cannot justly be accused of inordinate and disrespectful family ambition, inasmuch as it was not their wish that the County should be represented by two Members of their House. It has long been no secret that if any other Gentleman of the County properly qualified, whose *political principles did not substantially differ from their own*, would have come forward, he would have been *sure of their support*. If they resist to the utmost persons of *opposite* principles, the points in dispute being scarcely less than vital, the more must they be respected by every zealous Patriot and conscientious Man.

From what has been said, it appears that the political influence of the family of Lowther in Westmorland is the natural and reasonable consequence of a long-continued possession of large property—furnishing, with the judicious Nobleman at its head, an obvious support, defence, and *instrument* for the intelligent patriotism of the County. I have said instrument, and laid an

emphasis upon the word; because they who do not perceive that such is the truth are ignorant what shape, in these cases, social combinations must take, in order to be efficient and be preserved. Every great family which many have rallied round from congeniality of public sentiment, and for a political purpose, seems in course of time to direct, and in ordinary cases does direct, its voluntary adherents; but, if it should violate their wishes and shock their sense of right, it would speedily be reduced to such support only as it could *command;* and then would be seen who had been Principal, and who Secondary; to whom had belonged in reality the place of Agent, to whom that of the Employer. The sticklers for *emancipation* (a fashionable word in our times, when rational acquiescence is deemed baseness of spirit, and the most enlightened service passes for benighted servility!) have been free on numerous occasions to make the effort they are now making. Could any considerable person have been found to share their feeling, they might have proposed a Representative unacceptable to the Family whose ascendancy they complain of, with a certainty of securing his election, had the good-will of the Freeholders been on their side. What could possibly have prevented this trial? But they talk as if some mysterious power had been used to their injury. Some call it "a thraldom from without"—some "a drowsiness within."—Mr. Brougham's Kendal Committee find fault with others—the Chairman of the Appleby Committee is inclined to fix the blame nearer home. An accredited organ of their Kendal Committee tells you dogmatically, from the Bill of Rights, that "*Elections shall be free*"; and, if asked how the citation bears upon the case, his answer would most likely prove him of opinion, that, as noise is sometimes an accompaniment of freedom, so there can be no freedom without noise. Or, does the erudite Constitutionalist take this method of informing us, that the Lord Lieutenant has been accustomed to awe and

controul the Voters of this County, as Charles the Second and his Brother attempted to awe and controul those of the whole kingdom? If such be the meaning of the Writer and his Employers, what a pity Westmorland has not a Lunatic Asylum for the accommodation of the whole Body! In the same strain, and from the same quarter, we are triumphantly told "that no Peer of Parliament shall interfere in Elections." How injurious then to these Monitors and their Cause the report of the Hereditary High Sheriff's massy subscription, and his zealous countenance! Let him be entreated formally to contradict it;—or would they have one law for a Peer who is a Friend to Administration, and another for such as are its enemies? Is the same act to pass for culpable or praiseworthy, just as it thwarts, or furthers, the wishes of those who pronounce a judgment upon it?

The approvers of that order of things in which we live and move, at this day, as free Englishmen, are under no temptation to fall into these contradictions. They acknowledge that the general question is one of great delicacy: they admit that laws cannot be openly slighted without a breach of decorum, even when the relations of things are so far altered that Law looks one way—and Reason another. Where such disagreement occurs in respect to those Statutes which have the dignity of constitutional regulations, the less that is said upon the subject the better for the Country. But writers, who in such a case would gladly keep a silent course, are often forced out of it by wily hypocrites, and by others, who seem unconscious that, as there are Pedants in Literature, and Bigots in Religion, so are there Precisians in Politics—men without experience, who contend for limits and restraints when the Power which those limits and restraints were intended to confine is long since vanished. In the Statute-books Enactments of great name stand unrepealed, which may be compared to a stately oak in the last stage of decay,

or a magnificent building in ruins. Respect and admiration are due to both; and we should deem it profaneness to cut down the one, or demolish the other. But are we, therefore, to be sent to the sapless tree for may-garlands, or reproached for not making the mouldering ruin our place of abode? Government is essentially a matter of expediency; they who perceive this, and whose knowledge keeps pace with the changes of society, lament that, when Time is gently carrying what is useless or injurious into the back-ground, he must be interrupted in the process by Smatterers and Sciolists—intent upon misdirecting the indignation of the simple, and feeding the ill-humours of the ignorant. How often do such men, for no better purpose, remind their disciples of the standing order that declares it to be "a high infringement of the liberties and privileges of the Commons, for any Lord of Parliament to concern himself in the election of members, to serve for the Commons in Parliament."—This vote continues to be read publicly at the opening of every Session,—but practice rises up against it; and, without censuring the Custom, or doubting that it might be salutary when first established, (though it is not easily reconcilable with the eligibility of the eldest sons of Peers to the lower House, without any other qualification than their birth,) we may be permitted to be thankful that subsequent experience is not rendered useless to the living by the formal repetition of a voice from the tombs. Better is it that laws should remain till long trial has proved them an encumbrance, than that they should be too hastily changed; but this consideration need not prevent the avowal of an opinion, which every practical Statesman will confirm, that, if the property of the Peers were not, according to the will and by the care of the owners, substantially represented by Commoners, to a proportionate extent under their influence, their large Estates would be, for them, little better than sand liable to be blown about in the desert, and their privileges,

however useful to the country, would become fugitive as foam upon the surface of the sea.—(*See Note*, p. 329.)

I recollect a picture of Diogenes going about in search of an honest man. The philosopher bore a staff in one hand, and a lantern in the other. Did the latter accompaniment imply that he was a persevering Spirit who would continue his labour by night as well as by day? Or was it a stroke of satire on the part of the painter, indicating that, as Diogenes was a surly and conceited Cynic, he preferred darkness for his time of search, and a scanty and feeble light of his own carrying, to the bounteous assistance of the sun in heaven? How this might be with Diogenes, I know not; but assuredly thus it fares with our Reformers:—The Journal of some venal or factious scribbler is the black and smoky lantern they are guided by; and the sunshine spread over the face of a happy country is of no use in helping them to find any object they are in search of.—The plea of the degraded state of the Representation of Westmorland has been proved to be rotten;—if certain discontented persons desire to erect a building on a new plan, why not look about for a firm foundation? The dissatisfied ought honestly to avow, that their aim is to elect a Man, whose principles differ from those of the present Members to an extreme which takes away all hope, or even wish, that the interest he is to depend upon should harmonise with the interest hitherto prevalent in the County. Every thing short of this leaves them subject to a charge of acting upon false pretences, unless they prefer being accused of harbouring a pharisaical presumption, that would be odious were it not ridiculous. If the state of society in Westmorland be as corrupt as they describe, what, in the name of wonder, has preserved *their* purity? Away then with hypocrisy and hollow pretext; let us be no longer deafened with a rant about throwing off intolerable burthens, and repelling injuries, and avenging insults! Say at once that you disapprove of the present Members, and would have

others more to your own liking; you have named your Man, or rather necessity has named him for you. Your ship was reduced to extremities; it would have been better to abandon her—you thought otherwise; will you listen then while I shew that the Pilot, who has taken charge of the vessel, is ignorant of the soundings, and that you will have cause to be thankful if he does not prove very desperate in the management of the helm?

The Lands of England, you will recollect, Gentlemen, are originally supposed to be holden by grants from the King, our liege Lord; and the Constitution of the Country is accordingly a mellowed feudality. The oldest and most respectable name for a County Representative is, KNIGHT OF THE SHIRE. In the reign of Queen Anne it was enacted, that every Knight of the Shire (the eldest sons of Peers and a few others excepted) shall have a clear estate of Freehold or Copyhold to the value of £600 per annum. The same qualification continues to be required at this day; and, if the depreciation of money and other causes have injuriously affected the *Letter* of the Statute, the *Spirit* of it has not only been preserved in practice, but carried still higher. Hence we scarcely scruple to take for granted that a County Representative is a man of substantial landed property; or stands in such known relation to a conspicuous Estate that he has in it a valuable interest; and that, whoever be the possessor, such Estate may be looked upon as a pledge for his conduct.

The basis of the elective Franchise being property, the legal condition of eligibility to a seat in Parliament is the same. Our ancestors were not blind to the *moral* considerations which, if they did not suggest these ordinances, established a confidence in their expediency. Knowing that there could be no *absolute* guarantee for integrity, and that there was no *certain* test of discretion and knowledge, for bodies of men, the prudence of former times turned to the best substitute human nature would admit of, and civil society furnished. This was

property; which shewed that a man had something that might be impaired or lost by mismanagement; something which tended to place him above dependence from need; and promised, though it did not ensure, some degree of education to produce requisite intelligence. To be a Voter required a fixed Property, or a defined privilege; to be voted for, required more; and the scale of demand rose with the responsibility incurred. A Knight of the Shire must have double the Estate required from a Representative of a Borough. This is the old Law; and the course of things since has caused, as was observed above, that high office to devolve almost exclusively on Persons of large Estate, or their near connections. And why is it desirable that we should not deviate from this track? If we wish for honesty, we shall select men who, not being subject to one of the strongest temptations to be otherwise than honest, will incur heavier disgrace, and meet with less indulgence, if they disappoint us. Do we wish for sage conduct, our choice will fall upon those who have the wisdom that lurks in circumstances, to supply what may be deficient in their personal accomplishments. But, if there *be* a deficiency, the fault must lie with the Electors themselves. When persons of large property are confided in, we cannot plead want of opportunities for being acquainted with them. Men of large estates cannot but be men of wide concerns; and thus it is that they become known in proportion. Extensive landed property entails upon the possessor many duties, and places him in divers relations, by which he undergoes a public trial. Is a man just in his dealings? Does he keep his promises? Does he pay his debts punctually? Has he a feeling for the poor? Is his Family well governed? Is he a considerate Landlord? Does he attend to his own affairs; and are those of others, which have fallen under his care, diligently and judiciously managed? Answers to these questions, where the Subject of them has but an inconsiderable landed Property, can only be

expected from a very narrow circle of Neighbours ;—but place him at the head of a large Estate, and knowledge of what he is in these particulars must spread to a distance ; and it will be further known how he has acted as a Magistrate, and in what manner he has fulfilled the duties of every important office which he may have been called to, by virtue of his possessions.

Such are the general principles of reason which govern law, and justify practice in this weighty matter. The decision is not to take place upon imagination or conjecture. It is not to rest upon professions of the Candidate, or protestations of his Friends. As a County Representative is to be voted for by many—many must have opportunities of knowing him ; or, failing that intimate knowledge, we require the pledge of condition, the bond and seal of circumstance. Otherwise we withhold our confidence, and cannot be prevailed upon to give, to the opinions of an Individual unbacked by these advantages, the countenance and authority which they might derive from being supposed to accord with those of numerous Constituents scattered over a wide Country, and therefore less liable to be affected by partial views, or sudden and transitory passion—to diminish their value.

[1] The Freeholders of past times knew that their rights were most likely to repose in safety, under the shade of rank and property. Adventurers had no estimation among them ; there was no room for them—no place for them to appear in.—Think of this, and ask if your Fathers, could they rise from their tombs, would not have stared, with no small degree of wonder, upon the Person who now solicits the Suffrages of the County of Westmorland. What are his Rents—Where are his comings in ? He is engaged in an undertaking of great

[1] From this to "county," p. 319 was published (nearly as it stands) as a broadside "To the Freeholders of Westmorland," by Airy and Bellingham, February 28, 1818. Kendal.—ED.

expense—how is that expense supplied? From his own purse? Impossible! Where are the golden sinews which this Champion of Independence depends upon? If they be furnished by those who have no natural connection with the County, are we simple enough to believe that they dip their hands into their pockets out of pure good-will to us? May they not rather justly be suspected of a wish to embroil us for some sinister purpose? At all events, it might be some satisfaction would they shew themselves, so that, if we are to have a Subscription-candidate, we may know what sort of Persons he is indebted to, and at least be able to *guess* what they will require of him.

The principles that have been laid down, and the facts which have been adverted to, might seem to render it superfluous to retrace the public conduct of Mr. Brougham, and to enquire whether, in Parliament or at the London Tavern, in Palace Yard or elsewhere, those acts and courses, to which he himself refers as his *only* recommendation, do not still more unfit him for the trust which he covets. But Persons fond of novelty make light of deficiencies which would have admitted of no compensation in the judgment of our Ancestors; and the Candidate, being in no respect remarkable for deference to public opinion, is willing to avail himself of new-fangled expectations. Hence it becomes necessary to consider what would be the *political value of the Freeholds of Westmorland*, if the system of Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage (countenanced by Mr. Brougham) should be acted upon. But, as there has been much saying and unsaying on this subject, let us review the case.

In the House of Commons, on the 17th of February 1817, Lord Cochrane affirmed, that, on a certain day which he named, Mr. Brougham, at a dinner given at the London Tavern, to the Friends of Parliamentary Reform, used the following words, or words to the same effect:—"As often as we have required that Parliaments

should be chosen yearly, and that the elective Franchise should be extended to all who pay taxes, we have been desired to wait, for the enemy was at the gate, and ready to avail himself of the discords attending our political contests, in order to undermine our national independence. This argument is gone, and our Adversaries must now look for another. He had mentioned the two radical doctrines of *yearly election*, and the *Franchise enjoyed by all paying taxes;* but it would be superfluous to reason in favour of them here, where all are agreed on the subject."

When this, and other passages of like import, were produced by Lord C. in a paper declared to be in Mr. Brougham's handwriting, and to be a report made by himself of the speech then and there delivered, did Mr. Brougham deny that the handwriting was his, and that those words had fallen from his pen, as the best image that his own memory could furnish of what he had uttered? No—he gave vent only to a vague complaint of groundless aspersions; and accused certain persons of rashness and imprudence, and of not waiting only for a few days longer, when they would have had a full and fair opportunity of hearing his sentiments on this momentous subject. He then acknowledged that some observations had fallen from him *similar* to what had been read by the Noble Lord; and added, that he then said, or at least meant to be understood as saying, (he takes no notice of what he wrote or meant to be understood as writing,) *what he still maintained*—"that the power of election should be limited *to those who paid direct taxes;*" in other and more faithful words, should be *extended* to all persons in that condition. Mr. B. proceeded manfully to scout the notion, that the mere production of a speech delivered by him at a Tavern would make him swerve from the line of his duty, from the childish desire of keeping up an appearance of consistency!

What then is the amount? On the 23rd of June,

1814, (it cannot be unfair to state as a fact, that a vacancy in the Representation of Westminster was at that time looked for,) Mr. B. either was, or wished to be, accounted an Advocate of Annual Parliaments and Suffrage to be enjoyed by all paying taxes; and on the 17th of February 1817, when Mr. B. in another place is reminded of these, his avowed opinions, he is utterly mute upon the subject of Annual Parliaments, on the expediency of which he had before harangued at length, and confines himself to announce, as the sum of his then opinion, that suffrage should *be co-extensive with direct taxation!* The question had two faces, and Mr. B. chooses only to look at one. Hard pressed as he was, we cannot grant him this indulgence. He has, indeed, denounced, on other occasions, the *combined* doctrines of Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage as chimerical and absurd; though how near he came to the point of recommending both, at the London Tavern, he is any thing but explicit; (in fact both, as Lord C. shewed, *were* virtually recommended by him.) But what does he think of Annual Parliaments, in *conjunction* with his rectified opinion of Suffrage, co-extensive with direct taxation? Here he leaves us wholly in the dark; but if the turbulent workings of Mr. Brougham's mind, and his fondness for contentious exhibition, manifested on all possible occasions, may be admitted as positive evidence, to corroborate the negative which his silence on this point implies, we are justified in believing that his passions were on that side, whatever might be the bent of his cooler judgment. But this is of little import.

Introduce suffrage co-extensive with direct taxation, and Annual Parliaments must unavoidably follow. The clumsy simplicity of the one arrangement would, in the eyes of its Admirers, match strikingly with the palpable expediency of the other. Such a union is equally suitable to an age of gross barbarism and an age of false philosophy. It is amusing to hear this plan of suffrage for all who pay direct taxes recommended as consonant

to the genius and spirit of the British Constitution, when, in fact, though sufficiently rash and hazardous, it is no better than a timid plagiarism from the doctrine of the Rights of Man. Upon the model of that system, it begins with flagrant injustice to *chartered* rights; for if it were adopted, the elective Franchises that now exist would be depreciated accordingly; an invidious process for those who would lose by the alteration; and still more invidious for those to whom the privilege would not be suffered to descend. Alas! I am trifling with the subject! If the spirit of a People, composed as that of England now is, were once put into a ferment, by organising a democracy on this scheme, and to this extent, with a Press as free and licentious as our's has long been, what a flimsy barrier would remain to check the impetus of the excluded! When, in thousands, they bore down upon the newly constituted House of Assembly, demanding to be placed upon a level with their fellow-subjects, it would avail little to send a Peace-officer to enquire—where are your vouchers? Shew us that the Tax-gatherer has been among you! As soon as the petty Artisans, Shop-keepers, and Pothouse Keepers, of our over-grown Manufacturing Towns and our enormous Cities, had each and all been invested with the right of voting, the infection would spread like a plague.—Our neighbours on the Continent tried this plan of direct taxation; and, in the beginning of the third year of *their* Reform, Universal Suffrage, which had long ruled in spirit, lorded it in form also, from the Pyrenees to the Rhine, and from the Straits of Calais to the Shores of the Mediterranean. Down went the throne of France! and, if we should take the same guide, the Throne of England must submit a second time to a like destiny. Most of us would deem this a considerable evil—the greatest political evil that could befal the Land! Not so, however, our new Candidate! unless his opinion, if, indeed, he ever *held* what may be called an opinion upon any thing, has undergone import-

ant changes since the time when he expressed himself in the following words:—"When trade and the arts of civilised life have been carried to a certain length, war is the greatest calamity that can befal a community. Any state in modern Europe would be so completely ruined by the contests which Athens and Carthage easily supported, that it would be a matter of total indifference, whether the war was a series of victories or disasters. The return of Peace to France or England, after half so long a contest as either the Peloponnesian or the Punic wars, *would be cheaply purchased by any conquest or revolution, any change of dynasty or overthrow of Government.*" —See vol. i. p. 13, of *Colonial Policy*, by H. Brougham.

The above was given to the world when we were at war with Bonaparte; and that part of the English nation, who might read the book or hear of this author's doctrines, was plainly told, that, in *his* estimation, our Constitutional liberties were not worthy of being defended at the cost of a 14 years' war! But the unsuspecting, humane, and hope-cherishing adherents of the new Candidate will tell you, this does not prove that Mr. B. sets a small price on the Constitution and Laws of England; it only shews his tender-heartedness, and his extreme aversion to the horrors and devastation of war.—Hear then Mr. B. on these points also. Let his *serious* Friends take from his pen this pleasant description, which proves at least that he can be *jocular* upon a subject that makes most men grave; although they may not think twice seven years' war so great a calamity as *any* conquest or *Revolution*, any change of dynasty or *overthrow* of *Government*.—"A species of pecuniary commutation," he tells us, "has been contrived, by which the operations of war are rendered very harmless; they are performed by some hundreds of sailors fighting *harmlessly* on the barren plains of the ocean, and some thousands of soldiers carrying on a scientific, and regular, and *quiet* system of warfare, in countries *set apart for the purpose*, and resorted to as the arena

where the disputes of nations may be determined. The prudent policy had been adopted of *purchasing defeat* at a distance rather than victory at home; in this manner we *paid our allies for being vanquished; a few useless millions, and a few more useless lives were sacrificed;* and the result was, that we were amply rewarded by safety, increased resources, and real addition of power." (*Edinburgh Review*, No. II., and ascertained to be the writing of Mr. Brougham, by his having incorporated it in his *Colonial Policy*.)

The new Candidate challenges the strictest scrutiny into his public life, so that had we gone much farther than the above retrospect, we should only have been fulfilling his own wishes. Personal enmity towards the Subject, the Writer has none; being, in all that concerns the feelings of private life, friendly to Mr. Brougham, rather than otherwise. That his talents and habits of application entitle him to no common respect, must be universally acknowledged; but talents in *themselves merely* are, in the eyes of the judicious, no recommendation. If a sword be sharp, it is of the more importance to ask—What use it is likely to be put to? In government, if we can keep clear of mischief, good will come of itself. Fitness is the thing to be sought; and unfitness is much less frequently caused by general incapacity than by absence of that kind of capacity which the charge demands. Talent is apt to generate presumption and self-confidence; and no qualities are so necessary, in a Legislator, as the opposites of these—which, if they do not imply the existence of sagacity, are the best substitutes for it—whether they produce, in the general disposition of the mind, an humble reliance on the wisdom of our Forefathers, and a sedate yielding to the pressure of existing things; or carry the thoughts still higher, to religious trust in a superintending Providence, by whose permission laws are ordered and customs established, for other purposes than to be perpetually found fault with.

These suggestions are recommended to the consideration of our new Aspirant, and of all those public men whose judgments are perverted, and tempers soured, by long struggling in the ranks of opposition, and incessant bustling among the professors of Reform. I shall not recall to notice further particulars, because time, by softening asperities or removing them out of sight, is a friend to benevolence. Although a rigorous investigation has been invited, it is well that there is no need to run through the rash assertions, the groundless accusations, and the virulent invectives that disfigure the speeches of this never-silent Member. All these things, offensive to moderate men, are too much to the taste of many of Mr. Brougham's partizans in Westmorland. But I call upon those who relish these deviations from fair and honourable dealing—upon those also of his adherents who are inwardly ashamed of their Champion, on this account—and upon all the Freeholders concerned in the general question, to review what has been laid before them. Having done this, they cannot but admit that Mr. Brougham's *independence* is a dark *dependence*, which no one understands—and, that if a jewel *has* been lost in Westmorland, his are not the eyes by which it is to be found again. If the dignity of Knight of the Shire is to be conferred, *he* cannot be pronounced a fit person to receive it. For whether, my Brother Freeholders, you look at the humbleness of his situation amongst Country Gentlemen; or at his amphibious habits, in the two elements of Law and Authorship, and the odd vagaries he has played in both; or whether he be tried by the daring opinions which, by his own acknowledgment, he has maintained in Parliament, and at public meetings, on the subject of the elective Franchise; we meet with concurring proofs that HE IS ALTOGETHER UNFIT TO REPRESENT THIS, OR ANY OTHER COUNTY!

If, notwithstanding the truth of this inference, Mr. Brougham's talents, information, and activity make it

desirable that he should have a place in the House of Commons, why cannot they who are of this opinion be content, since he is already there? What service he is capable of rendering may be as effectually performed, should he never aspire beyond re-election to one of those seats which he now fills. The good, if any is to be looked for, may then be obtained with much less risk of evil. While he continues a Member for a close Borough, his dangerous opinions are left mainly to the support of his own character, and the arguments which his ingenuity can adduce to recommend them; but should they derive that degree of sanction from the Freeholders of a County, which success in his present undertaking would imply, they might become truly formidable!—Let every one, then, who cannot accompany Mr. B. in his bold theories, and does not go the length of admiring the composition of his political life, be cautious how he betakes himself to such help, in order to reduce, within what he may deem due bounds, the influence of a Family prominent in the civil service of the County from the earliest times. It is apparent, if the Writer has not employed his pen in vain, that against this influence there is no just ground of complaint. They who think with him will continue to uphold it, as long as the Family proves that it understands its own interest and honour by a judicious attention to our's. And should it forfeit our respect by misconduct, in the unavoidable decline of its political importance which would ensue, we should not envy that House its splendid possessions or its manifold privileges; knowing that some Families must be permanently great and opulent, or there would be no security for the possessions of the middle ranks, or of the humble Proprietor. But, looking at the present constitution and measure of this influence, you cannot but perceive, Gentlemen, that, if there were *indeed* any thing in it that could justly be complained of, our duty might still be to bear with the local evil, as correcting an opposite extreme in some

other quarter of the Island ;—as a counterpoise of some weight elsewhere pressing injuriously upon the springs of social order. How deplorable would be the ignorance, how pitiful the pride, that could prevent us from submitting to a partial evil for the sake of a general good ! In fine, if a comprehensive survey enjoined no such sacrifice, and even if all that the unthinking, the malevolent, and the desperate, all that the deceivers and the deceived, have conjointly urged at this time against the House of Lowther, were literally true, you would be cautious how you sought a remedy for aristocratic oppression, by throwing yourselves into the arms of a flaming democracy !

Government and civil Society are things of infinite complexity, and rash Politicians are the worst enemies of mankind ; because it is mainly through them that rational liberty has made so little progress in the world. You have heard of a Profession to which the luxury of modern times has given birth, that of Landscape-Gardeners, or Improvers of Pleasure-grounds. A competent Practitioner in this elegant art begins by considering every object, that he finds in the place where he is called to exercise his skill, as having a right to remain, till the contrary be proved. If it be a deformity he asks whether a slight alteration may not convert it into a beauty ; and he destroys nothing till he has convinced himself by reflection that no alteration, no diminution or addition, can make it ornamental. Modern Reformers reverse this judicious maxim. If a thing is before them, so far from deeming that it has on that account a claim to continue and be deliberately dealt with, its existence with them is a sufficient warrant for its destruction. Institutions are to be subverted, Practices radically altered, and Measures to be reversed. All men are to change their places, not because the men are objectionable, or the place is injurious, but because certain Pretenders are eager to be at work, being tired of both. Some are forward, through pruriency of

youthful talents—and Greybeards hobble after them, in whom number of years is a cloak for poverty of experience. Some who have much leisure, because every affair of their own has withered under their mismanagement, are eager to redeem their credit, by stirring gratis for the public;—others, having risen a little in the world, take *swimmingly* to the trade of factious Politics, on their original stock of base manners and vulgar opinions. Some are theorists hot for practice, others hacknied Practitioners who never had a theory; many are vain, and must be busy; and almost as many are needy—and the spirit of justice, deciding upon their own merits, will not suffer them to remain at rest.

The movement made among us, my countrymen of Westmorland, was preceded, announced, and prepared, by *such* Agitators, disseminating falsehoods and misrepresentations, equally mischievous, whether they proceeded from wilful malice or presumptuous ignorance. Take warning in time. Be not persuaded to unite with them who, whether they intend you injury or not, cannot but prove your enemies. Let not your's be the first County in England, which, since the days of Wilkes, and after the dreadful example of France, has given countenance to principles congenial to the vice, profligacy, and half-knowledge of Westminster; but which formerly were unheard of among us, or known only to be detested. Places and Pensions, formidable things, if you like! but far better these, with our King and Constitution, with our quiet fire-sides and flourishing fields, than proscription and confiscation, without them! Long wars, and their unavoidable accompaniment, heavy taxes—both these evils are liable to intemperate exaggeration; but, be they what they may, would there be less of war and lighter taxes, as so many grumblers loudly preach, and too many submissive spirits fondly believe, if the House of Commons were altered into one of more popular frame, with more frequent opportunities given of changing the persons sent thither? A reference to the twenty years

which succeeded the Revolution, may suffice to shew the fallacy of such expectations. Parliaments were then triennial, and democratic principles fashionable even among the Servants of the Crown. Yet, during that space of time, wars were almost incessant; and never were burthens imposed so far above the apparent ability of the Nation to support them. Having adverted to the war-like measures of those reigns merely to support my argument, I cannot forbear to applaud the high-spirited Englishmen of that age. Our forefathers were tried, as we have been tried—and their virtue did not sink under the duties which the decrees of Providence imposed upon it. They triumphed, though less signally than we have done;—following their example, let us now cultivate fortitude, encourage hope and chearful industry; and give way to enterprise. So will prosperity return. The stream, which has been checked, will flow with recruited vigour—and, when another century shall have passed away, the ambition of France will be as little formidable to our then-existing Posterity as it is now to us. But the lessons of History must be studied;—they teach us that, under every form of civil polity, war will contrive to lift up its head, and most pertinaciously in those States where the People have most sway. When I recur to these admonitions, it is to entreat that the discontented would exercise their understandings, rather than consult their passions; first separating real from mistaken grievances, and then endeavouring to ascertain (which cannot be done with a glance of the mind) how much is fairly attributable to the Government; how much to ourselves; and how large a portion of what we have to endure has been forced upon us by a foreign Power, over whom we could exercise no controul but by arms. The course here recommended will keep us, as we are free and happy—will preserve us from what, through want of these and like precautions, other Nations have been hurried into—domestic broils, sanguinary tribunals, civil slaughter in the field, anarchy, and (sad

cure and close of all!) tranquillity under the iron grasp of military despotism. Years before this catastrophe, what would have become of your Elective Franchise, Freeholders of Westmorland? The Coadjutors of the obscure Individuals who, from a distance, first excited this movement under a pretence of recovering your Rights, would have played the whirlwind among your Property, and crushed you, less perhaps out of malice, than because, in their frenzy, they could not help it.

A conviction that the subject is ill understood by those who were unprepared for what has just been said, is the excuse to my own mind, Gentlemen, for having made so protracted a demand upon your attention. The ruinous tendencies of this self-flattering enterprise can only be checked by timely and general foresight. The contest in which we are engaged has been described by Persons noticing it from a distance, as the work of a Cabal of Electioneering Jobbers, who have contrived to set up the Thanet against the Lowther interests, that both Parties might spend their money for the benefit of those who cared for neither. The Thanet interest in the County of Westmorland!—one might almost as well talk of an interest in the moon! The Descendant of the Cliffords has not thought it worth while to recommend himself to the Electors, by the course either of his public or his private life; and therefore, though his purse may have weight, and his possessions are considerable, he himself, in reference to the supposed object, is nothing. If this had been really an attempt made by a numerous body of malcontent Freeholders to carry their wishes for a change into effect, by placing at their head some *approved* Chief of an ancient Family, possessed of real consequence in the County, the proceeding, considered in the abstract, could not have been objected to. This County is, and ever was, open to fair and honourable contest, originating in principles sanctioned by general practice; and carried on by means which, if universally adopted, would not be injurious to the State. But the

present measure stands not upon any such grounds; it is an attempt, no matter with what ultimate view, TO EFFECT A TOTAL CHANGE IN THE CHARACTER OF COUNTY ELECTIONS; beginning here with the expectation, as is openly avowed, of being imitated elsewhere. It *reverses* the order hitherto pursued. Instead of aiming to influence the less wealthy and less instructed Freeholders through the medium of those whom they have been accustomed to confide in—instead of descending by legitimate gradations from high to lower, from the well-instructed and widely-experienced to those who have not had equal advantages—it commences at the bottom; far beneath the degree of the poorest Freeholders; and works upwards, with an inflammatory appeal to feelings that owe their birth to previous mis-statement of facts. Opulence, rank, station, privilege, distinction, intellectual culture—the notions naturally following upon these in a Country like England are protection, succour, guidance, example, dissemination of knowledge, introduction of improvements, and all the benefits and blessings that among Freemen are diffused, where authority like the parental, from a sense of community of interest and the natural goodness of mankind, is softened into brotherly concern. This is no Utopian picture of the characteristics of elevated rank, wealth, competence, and learned and liberal education in England; for, with the liberty of speech and writing that prevails amongst us, if such rays of light and love did not generally emanate from superiority of station, possessions, and accomplishment, the frame of society, which we behold, could not subsist. Yes—in spite of pride, hardness of heart, grasping avarice, and other selfish passions, the not unfrequent concomitants of affluence and worldly prosperity, the mass of the people are justly dealt with, and tenderly cherished;—accordingly, gratitude without servility; dispositions to prompt return of service, undebased by officiousness; and respectful attachment, that, with small prejudice to the understanding, greatly enriches the

heart: such are the sentiments with which Englishmen of the humblest condition have been accustomed to look up towards their Friends and Benefactors. Among the holders of fixed property (whether labourers in the field or artisans); among those who are fortunate enough to have an interest in the soil of their Country; these human sentiments of civil life are strengthened by additional dependencies.—I am aware how much universal habits of rapacious speculation, occasioned by fluctuations in the value of produce during the late war—how much the spread of manufactories and the baleful operation of the Poor Laws, have done to impair these indigenous and salutary affections. I am conscious of the sad deterioration, and no one can lament it more deeply; but sufficient vitality is left in the Stock of ancient virtue to furnish hope that, by careful manuring, and skilful application of the knife to the withered branches, fresh shoots might thrive in their place—were it not for the base artifices of Malignants, who, pretending to invigorate the tree, pour scalding water and corrosive compounds among its roots; so that the fibres are killed in the mould by which they have been nourished.

That for years such artifices have been employed in Westmorland, and in a neighbouring County, with unremitting activity, must be known to all. Whatever was disliked has been systematically attacked, by the vilifying of persons connected with it. The Magistrates and public Functionaries, up to the Lord Lieutenant himself, have been regularly traduced—as unfaithful to their trust; the Clergy habitually derided—as time-servers and slavish dependants; and the Gentry, if conspicuous for attachment to the Government, stigmatised—as Men without honour or patriotism, and leagued in conspiracy against the Poor. After this manner have the Provincial Newspapers (the chief agents in this local mischief,) concurred with the disaffected London Journals, who were playing the same part towards laws and institutions, and general measures of State, by calumniating the principal Authorities of

the Kingdom. Hence, instead of gratitude and love, and confidence and hope, are resentment and envy, mistrust and jealousy, and hatred and rancour, inspired:—and the drift of all is, to impress the Body of the People with a belief that neither justice can be expected, nor benevolence hoped for, unless power be transferred to Persons least resembling those who now hold it; that is—to Demagogues and Incendiaries!

It will be thought that this attempt is too extravagant to be dangerous; inasmuch as every member of society, possessed of weight and authority, must revolt from such a transfer, and abhor the issues to which it points. Possessed of weight and authority—with whom? These Agitators *have* weight and authority there, where they seek for it, that is with no small portion of what they term the physical strength of the Country. The People have ever been the dupes of extremes. VAST GAINS WITH LITTLE PAINS, is a jingle of words that would be an appropriate inscription for the insurrectionary banner of unthinking humanity. To walk—to wind—towards a thing that is coveted—how unattractive an operation compared with leaping upon it at once!—Certainly no one possessed of *legitimate authority* can desire such a transfer as we have been forced to contemplate; but he may aid in bringing it about, without desiring it. Numerous are the courses of civil action in which men of pure dispositions and honourable aims, are tempted to take part with those who are utterly destitute of both. Be not startled, if, merely glancing at the causes of this deplorable union, as it is now exhibited in this part of England, I observe, that there is no necessary connection between public spirit and political sagacity. How often does it happen that right intention is averse to inquiry as casting a damp upon its own zeal, and a suspicion upon the intrinsic recommendation of its object! Good men turn instinctively from inferences unfavourable to human nature. But there are facts which are not to be resisted, where the understanding is sound. The self-

styled Emancipators have tried their strength; if there were any thing promising to England in their efforts, we should have seen this Country arrayed in opposite Parties resembling each other in quality and composition. Little of that appears. The promoters of the struggle did not hope for such a result; and many of them would not have wished for it, could they have expected to be carried through by that ruinous division of the upper from the lower ranks of society, on which they mainly relied.

But, Freeholders, wicked devices have not done the service that was expected from them. You are upon your guard; the result of this canvass has already shewn that a vast majority of you are proof against assault, and remain of sound mind. Such example of Men abiding by the rules of their Forefathers cannot but encourage others, who yet hesitate, to determine in favour of the good cause. The more signal the victory the greater will be the honour paid to fixed and true principles, and the firmer our security against the recurrence of like innovations. At all events, enough, I trust, has been effected by the friends of our present Representatives to protect those who have been deceived, and may not in time awaken from their delusion. May their eyes be opened, and at no distant day; so that, perceiving the benefits which the laws, as now enacted and administered, ensure to their native Land, they may feel towards you who make the wiser choice the gratitude which you will have deserved.—The beginnings of great troubles are mostly of comparative insignificance;—a little spark can kindle a mighty conflagration, and a small leak will suffice to sink a stately vessel. To that loyal decision of the event now pending, which may be confidently expected, Britain may owe the continuance of her tranquillity and freedom; the maintenance of the justice and equity for which she is pre-eminent among nations; and the preservation of her social comforts, her charitable propensities, her morals

and her religion. Of this, as belonging to the future, we cannot speak with certainty; but not a doubt can exist that the practices which led to the destruction of all that was venerable in a neighbouring Country, have upon this occasion been industriously, unscrupulously, eagerly resorted to.—But my last words shall be words of congratulation and thanksgiving upon a bright prospect that the wishes will be crossed, and the endeavours frustrated, of those amongst us who, without their own knowledge, were ready to relinquish every good which they and we possess, by uniting with overweening Reformers—to compose the VANGUARD OF A FEROCIOUS REVOLUTION!

A FREEHOLDER.

WESTMORLAND, *February* 24, 1818.

NOTE

I HAVE not scrupled to express myself strongly on this subject, perceiving what use is made by the Opposite Party of those resolutions of the House of Commons. In support of my opinion I quote the following from the *Carlisle Patriot* of the 14th of February, premising, with the Author of the Letter from which it is extracted, that by far the greatest number of opulent Landholders are Members of the Upper House, and that the richest subjects are some of its Peers:—

"The Peers of Great Britain, stripped as they now are of the overgrown importance which they derived from the Feudal System, have made no acquisition of political influence to compensate for the loss of it, by an increasing extension of patronage, either collectively or individually, like the crown; nor have the various circumstances operated upon their body in any considerable degree, which have effected such a radical and powerful accumulation of consequence and importance in the Lower House. Add to this, that the general sentiment or feeling that commonly exists between them and the body of the people bears no analogy to the vivid principles of affectionate loyalty that tend so strongly to secure and guard the person and rights of the King, or the reciprocal sympathy of congenial interests that acts and directs so powerfully betwixt

the Commons and the Community in general. On the contrary, the spirit that exists betwixt the Peers as a collectively distinct body, and the people at large, is a spirit of *repulsion* rather than of attraction. In a corporate light, they are viewed with no sentiments of kindly affection, and therefore upon the supposition of a political contest betwixt them and either of the other two Estates, they would inevitably labour under the disadvantage of carrying it on against all the force of the prejudices, which to a great extent always directs popular opinion; hence, amidst all the contests and struggles which have agitated or convulsed the Kingdom since the Reign of Henry the Seventh, the political importance of the Peers, considered as an Estate of Parliament, has been rather diminished than increased; and were such a democratical House of Commons as our modern Patriots so loudly call for, to be efficiently formed, the constitutional equilibrium of our envied public system would be infallibly destroyed, and the spirit of our Legislative Body, which in a great measure awards influence in proportion to property, completely abrogated:—and it is in vain to suppose that if even such a change was desirable, it could possibly be effected without producing a train of incalculable miseries that would much more than overbalance any partial good which could reasonably be expected from the alteration. . . ."

"As property then is incontestibly the foundation-stone of political right in Britain, it follows, as an inevitable consequence, that the ratio of these rights should be in some measure commensurate to the extent of the property, otherwise the immutable maxims of justice, as well as the spirit of the Constitution, is violated; for it would be palpably unjust to put a man who possessed a great stake in the welfare of the Country, and paid comparatively a greater proportion of its public revenue, on a level with the inferior freeholders, who, not possessing any thing like an equal extent of property, cannot possibly have the means of equally contributing to the exigencies of the State. . . .

"Now if any considerate conscientious man will calmly reflect upon the power of the House of Commons in the imposition of taxes, and in how many ways the public burthen affects the landed interest, either directly or indirectly, he must acknowledge the expediency, as well as the necessity and justice of the system, which, *steadily though silently*, protects the great landholders in exercising an appropriate influence in the election of the Representatives of the People.—PHOCION."

Previous to the Reign of Henry the Seventh, the Peers defended their property and their privileges through the means of armed Retainers. That politic Prince, by laws directed against the number of these Retainers; by bringing in use the making of leases; and by statutes framed for the purpose of "unfettering more easily the Estates of his powerful Nobility, and laying them more open to alienation," prepared the way for reducing the power of an Order which had been too strong for the Crown. The operation of these laws, in course of time, would have brought the Peers, as an Estate of the Realm, to utter insignificance, had not the practice of supplying the Peerage with new Members, through creation by patent without intervention of Parliament, been substituted for the only mode previously tolerated by the great Barons for the exercise of this royal prerogative, namely, by authority of Parliament. Thus did the consequence of the Order, notwithstanding the diminution of its power, continue to be maintained;—rich Commoners and Royal Favourites being introduced to supply the places of extinguished Families, or those whose wealth had fallen into decay. This prerogative grew without immoderate exercise till the close of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth. The first of the Stuarts employed it lavishly, not considering the changes that had taken place. His predecessors of the House of Tudor, by breaking down the feudal strength of the Lords, and by transfer (through the Reformation) of the Spiritual supremacy to themselves as temporal Sovereigns, had come into possession of a superfluity of power which enabled the Crown to supply what was wanted in the Peers for their own support. But through remote operation of the same causes, the Commons were rising fast into consequence, with a puritanical spirit of republicanism spreading rapidly amongst them. Hence the augmentation of the number of Peers, made by James the First, notwithstanding the addition of property carried by it to the Upper House, did not add sufficient strength to that body to compensate for the distastefulness of the measure to the people: and, as far as the property of the New Peers was but the creature of prodigal grants from the Crown, the conjoint strength of the two estates received no increase. In the meanwhile surrenders were made of the power of the Crown with infatuated facility; till the Commons became so strong that the right of creating Boroughs, being openly disputed, was almost abandoned; and the speedy consequence of the whole was that the two parliamentary Estates of King and Lords fell before the intemperance of the third. After the Restoration,

the disputes about the bounds of Liberty and Prerogative were revived; but Prerogative was gradually abandoned for the less obnoxious and less obvious operations of influence. The numerous creations of Peers were complained of; but, whatever motive might have governed those creations, they were justified by the necessity of things. Large as were the additions made to the number of Peers they were insufficient to give the House its due weight as a separate Estate in the Legislature. Through the reigns of Charles, William, and Anne, whether the Crown was disposed to tyranny, or the Commons were venal, factious, or arbitrary, we see too many proofs of the Lords wanting natural strength to maintain their rights, and carry their patriotic wishes into effect, even when they were supported by marked expressions of popular opinion in their favour. If the changes which had taken place in the structure of Society would have allowed them to act regularly as an independent body upon its intrinsic resources, a death-blow was given to such expectation towards the close of the reign of Queen Anne, when twelve Peers were created in one day. This act, deservedly made one of the articles of impeachment against Lord Oxford, shewed that their sentiments, as a Body, were at the mercy of any unprincipled Administration, and *compelled* them to look about for some other means of being attended to;—and the most obvious was the best for the Country and themselves—That of taking care of, and augmenting, the influence which they possessed in the House of Commons. Reformers plead against this practice, constitutional resolutions still existing. The slight review which has been given demonstrates its necessity if the Constitution is to be preserved. The only question which a practical politician can tolerate for a moment relates to the *degree* of this influence;—has it been carried too far? The considerations which put me upon writing the present note (for the length of which I ought to apologise) do not require the discussion of this point. The amicable reader will rejoice with me that, in spite of mutual shocks and encroachments, the three Orders of the State are preserved in salutary equipoise, although the mode of bringing this about has unavoidably changed with change of circumstances. The spirit of the Constitution remains unimpaired, nor have the essential parts of its frame undergone any alteration. May both endure as long as the Island itself!

XVIII

THE CATHOLIC RELIEF BILL, 1829

THE CATHOLIC RELIEF BILL,[1] 1829

My Lord,

I have been hesitating for the space of a week, whether I should take the liberty of addressing you; but as the decision draws near my anxiety increases, and I cannot refrain from intruding upon you for a few minutes. I will try to be brief, throwing myself upon your indulgence, if what I have to say prove of little moment.

The question before us is, Can Protestantism and Popery—or, somewhat narrowing the ground, Can the Church of England (including that of Ireland) and the Church of Rome—be co-ordinate powers in the constitution of a free country, and at the same time Christian belief be in that country a vital principle of action? The States of the Continent afford no proof whatever that the existence of Protestantism and Romanism under the specified conditions is practicable; nor can they be rationally referred to as furnishing a guide for us. In France, the most conspicuous of these States and the freest, the number of Protestants in comparison with Catholics is insignificant, and unbelief and superstition almost divide the country between them. In Prussia, there is no legislative Assembly; the Government is essentially military; and excepting the countries upon

[1] In this, as in other instances, there is no extant MS. discoverable with which to compare the title, or the text of the letter printed by Dr. Grosart in 1876. He mentions, however, that in his edition it was "printed from the original Manuscript." The letter was addressed by Wordsworth to the then Bishop of London, Dr. Blomfield.—Ed.

the Rhine, recently added to that Power, the proportion of Catholics is inconsiderable. In Hanover, Jacob speaks of the Protestants as more than ten to one; here, indeed, is a legislative Assembly, but its powers are ill defined. Hanover had, and still may have, a censorship of the press—an indulgent one; it can afford to be so through the sedative virtue of the standing army of the country, and that of the Germanic League to back the executive in case of commotion. No sound-minded Englishman will build upon the short-lived experience of the kingdom of the Netherlands. In Flanders a benighted Papacy prevails, which defeated the attempts of the king to enlighten the people by education; and I am well assured that the Protestant portion of Holland have small reason to be thankful for the footing upon which they have been there placed. If that kingdom is to last, there is great cause for fear that its government will incline more and more to Romanism as the religion of a great majority of its subjects, and as one which by its slavish spirit makes the people more manageable. If so, it is to be apprehended that Protestantism will gradually disappear before it; and the ruling classes, in a still greater degree than they now are, will become infidels, as the easiest refuge in their own minds from the debasing doctrines of Papacy.

Three great conflicts[1] are before the progressive nations, between Christianity and Infidelity, between Papacy and Protestantism, and between the spirit of the old feudal and monarchical governments and the representative and republican system, as established in America. The Church of England, in addition to her infidel and Roman Catholic assailants, and the politicians of the anti-feudal class, has to contend with a formidable body of Protestant Dissenters. Amid these several and often combined attacks, how is she to maintain herself?

[1] In this classification I anticipate matter which Mr. Southey has in the press, the substance of a conversation between us.—W. W.

From which of these enemies has she most to fear? Some are of opinion that Papacy is less formidable than Dissent, whose bias is republican, which is averse to monarchy, to a hierarchy, and to the tything system—to all which Romanism is strongly attached. The abstract principles embodied in the creed of the Dissenters' catechism are without doubt full as politically dangerous as those of the Romanists; but fortunately their creed is not their practice. They are divided among themselves, they acknowledge no foreign jurisdiction, their organisation and discipline are comparatively feeble; and in times long past, however powerful they proved themselves to overthrow, they are not likely to be able to build up. Whatever the Presbyterian form, as in the Church of Scotland, may have to recommend it, we find that the sons of the nobility and gentry of Scotland who choose the sacred profession almost invariably enter into the Church of England; and for the same reason, viz. the want of a hierarchy (you will excuse me for connecting views so humiliating with divine truth), the rich Dissenters, in the course of a generation or two, fall into the bosom of our Church. As holding out attractions to the upper orders, the Church of England has no advantages over that of Rome, but rather the contrary. Papacy will join with us in preserving the form, but for the purpose and in the hope of seizing the substance for itself.

Its ambition is upon record; it is essentially at enmity with light and knowledge; its power to exclude these blessings is not so great as formerly, though its desire to do so is equally strong, and its determination to exert its power for its own exaltation by means of that exclusion is not in the least abated. The See of Rome justly regards England as the head of Protestantism; it admires, it is jealous, it is envious of her power and greatness. It despairs of being able to destroy them, but it is ever on the watch to regain its lost influence over that country; and it hopes to effect

this through the means of Ireland. The words of this last sentence are not my own, but those of the head of one of the first Catholic families of the county from which I write, spoken without reserve several years ago. Surely the language of this individual must be greatly emboldened when he sees the prostrate condition in which our yet Protestant Government now lies before the Papacy of Ireland. "The great Catholic interest," "the old Catholic interest," I know to have been phrases of frequent occurrence in the mouth of a head of the first Roman Catholic family of England; and to descend far lower, "What would satisfy you?" said, not long ago, a person to a very clever lady, a dependent upon another branch of that family. "That church," replied she, pointing to the parish church of the large town where the conversation took place. Monstrous expectation! yet not to be overlooked as an ingredient in the compound of Papacy. This "great Catholic interest" we are about to embody in a legislative form. A Protestant Parliament is to turn itself into a canine monster with two heads, which, instead of keeping watch and ward, will be snarling at and bent on devouring each other.

Whatever enemies the Church of England may have to struggle with now and hereafter, it is clear that at this juncture she is specially called to take the measure of her strength as opposed to the Church of Rome—that is her most pressing enemy. The Church of England, as to the point of private judgment, standing between the two extremes of Papacy and Dissent, is entitled to heartfelt reverence; and among thinking men, whose affections are not utterly vitiated, never fails to receive it. Papacy will tolerate no private judgment, and Dissent is impatient of anything else. The blessing of Providence has thus far preserved the Church of England between the shocks to which she has been exposed from those opposite errors; and notwithstanding objections may lie against some parts of her Liturgy, particularly the Athanasian Creed, and however some of her articles may

be disputed about, her doctrines are exclusively scriptural, and her practice is accommodated to the exigencies of our weak nature. If this be so, what has she to fear? Look at Ireland, might be a sufficient answer. Look at the disproportion between her Catholic and Protestant population. Look at the distempered heads of the Roman Catholic Church insisting upon terms which in France, and even in Austria, dare not be proposed, and which the Pope himself would probably relinquish for a season. Look at the revenues of the Protestant Church; her cathedrals, her churches, that once belonged to the Romanists, and where, *in imagination*, their worship has never ceased to be celebrated. Can it be doubted that when the yet existing restrictions are removed, that the disproportion in the population and the wealth of the Protestant Church will become more conspicuous objects for discontent to point at; and that plans, however covert, will be instantly set on foot, with the aid of new powers, for effecting an overthrow, and, if possible, a transfer? But all this is too obvious; I would rather argue with those who think that by excluding the Romanists from political power we make them more attached to their religion, and cause them to unite more strongly in support of it. Were this true to the extent maintained, we should still have to balance between the unorganised power which they derive from a sense of injustice, real or supposed, and the legitimate organised power which concession would confer upon surviving discontent; for no one, I imagine, is weak enough to suppose that discontent would disappear. But it is a deception, and a most dangerous one, to conclude that if a free passage were given to the torrent, it would lose, by diffusion, its ability to do injury. The checks, as your Lordship well knows, which are after a time necessary to provoke other sects to activity, are not wanted here. The Roman Church stands independent of them through its constitution, so exquisitely contrived, and through its doctrine and discipline, which give a

peculiar and monstrous power to its priesthood. In proof of this, take the injunction of celibacy, alone separating the priesthood from the body of the community, and the practice of confession, making them masters of the conscience, while the doctrines give them an absolute power over the will. To submit to such thraldom men must be bigoted in its favour; and that we see is the case of Spain, in Portugal, in Austria, in Italy, in Flanders, in Ireland, and in all countries where you have Papacy in full blow. And does not history prove, that however other sects may have languished under the relaxing influence of good fortune, Papacy has ever been most fiery and rampant when most prosperous?

But many, who do not expect that conciliation will be the result of concession, have a further expedient on which they rely much. They propose to take the Romish Church in Ireland into pay, and expect that afterwards its clergy will be as compliant to the Government as the Presbyterians in that country have proved. This measure is, in the first place, too disingenuous not to be condemned by honest men; for the Government acting on this policy would degrade itself by offering bribes to men of a sacred calling to act contrary to their sense of duty. If they be sincere, as priests and truly spiritual-minded, they will find it impossible to accept of a stipend, known to be granted with such expectation. If they be worldlings and false of heart, they will practise double-dealing, and seem to support the Government while they are actually undermining it; for they know that if they be suspected of sacrificing the interests of the Church they will lose all authority over their flocks. Power and consideration are more valued than money. The priests will not be induced to risk their sway over the people for any sums that our Government would venture to afford them out of the exhausted revenues of the empire. Surely they would prefer to such a scanty hire the hope of carving for themselves from the property of the Protestant Church of their country, or even the

gratification of stripping usurpation—for such they deem it—of its gains, though there may be no hope to win what others are deprived of. Many English favourers of this scheme are reconciled to what they call a modification of the Irish Protestant Establishment in an application of a portion of the revenues to the support of the Romish Church. This they deem reasonable; shortly it will be openly aimed at, and they will rejoice should they accomplish their purpose. But your Lordship will agree with me that, if that happen, it would be one of the most calamitous events that ignorance has in our time given birth to. After all, could the secular clergy be paid out of this spoliation, or in any other way? The Regulars would rise in consequence of their degradation; and where would be the influence that could keep them from mischief? They would swarm over the country to prey upon the people still more than they now do. In all the reasonings of the friends to this bribing scheme, the distinctive character of the Papal Church is overlooked.

But they who expect that tranquillity will be a permanent consequence of the Relief Bill dwell much upon the mighty difference in opinion and feeling between the upper and lower ranks of the Romish communion. They affirm that many keep within the pale of the Church as a point of honour; that others have notions greatly relaxed, and though not at present prepared to separate, they will gradually fall off. But what avail the inward sentiments of men if they are convinced that by acting upon them they will forfeit their outward dignity and power? As long as the political influence which the priests now exercise shall endure, or anything like it, the great proprietors will be obliged to dissemble, and to conform in their action to the demands of that power. Such will be the conduct of the great Roman Catholic proprietors; nay, further, I agree with those who deem it probable that, through a natural and reasonable desire to have their property duly represented, many landholders who

are now Protestant will be tempted to go over to Papacy. This may be thought a poor compliment to Protestantism, since religious scruples, it is said, are all that keep the Papists out; but is not the desire to be in, pushing them on almost to rebellion at this moment? We are taking, I own, a melancholy view of both sides; but human nature, be it what it may, must by legislators be looked at as it is.

In the treatment of this question we hear perpetually of wrong; but the wrong is all on one side. If the political power of Ireland is to be a transfer from those who are of the State religion of the country to those who are not, there is nothing gained on the score of justice. We hear also much of STIGMA; but this is not to be done away unless all offices, the Privy Council and the Chancellorship, be open to them; that is, unless we allow a man to be eligible to keep the King's conscience who has not his own in his keeping; unless we open the throne itself to men of this soul-degrading faith.

The condition of Ireland is indeed, and long has been, wretched. Lamentable is it to acknowledge, that the mass of the people are so grossly uninformed, and from that cause subject to such delusions and passions, that they would destroy each other were it not for restraints put upon them by a power out of themselves. This power it is that protracts their existence in a state for which otherwise the course of nature would provide a remedy by reducing their numbers through mutual destruction; so that English civilisation may fairly be said to have been the shield of Irish barbarism. And now these swarms of degraded people, which could not have existed but through the neglect and misdirected power of the sister island, are by a withdrawing of that power to have their own way, and to be allowed to dictate to us. A population, vicious in character as unnatural in immediate origin (for it has been called into birth by short-sighted landlords, set upon adding to the number of votes at their command, and by priests who

for lucre's sake favour the increase of marriages), is held forth as constituting a claim to political power strong in proportion to its numbers, though in a sane view that claim is in an inverse ratio to them. Brute force indeed wherever lodged, as we are too feelingly taught at present, must be measured and met—measured with care, in order to be met with fortitude.

The chief proximate causes of Irish misery and ignorance are Papacy—of which I have said so much—and the tenure and management of landed property, and both these have a common origin, viz. the imperfect conquest of the country. The countries subjected by the ancient Romans, and those that in the middle ages were subdued by the Northern tribes, afford striking instances of the several ways in which nations may be improved by foreign conquest. The Romans by their superiority in arts and arms, and, in the earlier period of their history, in virtues also, may seem to have established a moral right to force their institutions upon other nations, whether under a process of decline or emerging from barbarism; and this they effected, we all know, not by overrunning countries as Eastern conquerors have done, and Buonaparte in our own days, but by completing a regular subjugation, with military roads and garrisons, which became centres of civilisation for the surrounding district. Nor am I afraid to add, though the fact might be caught at as bearing against the general scope of my argument, that both conquerors and conquered owed much to the participation of civil rights which the Romans liberally communicated. The other mode of conquest, that pursued by the Northern nations, brought about its beneficial effects by the settlement of a hardy and vigorous people among the distracted and effeminate nations against whom their incursions were made. The conquerors transplanted with them their independent and ferocious spirit to reanimate exhausted communities, and in their turn received a salutary mitigation, till in process of time the conqueror and conquered, having a common

interest, were lost in each other. To neither of these modes was unfortunate Ireland subject, and her insular territory, by physical obstacles, and still more by moral influences arising out of them, has aggravated the evil consequent upon independence lost as hers was. The writers of the time of Queen Elizabeth have pointed out how unwise it was to transplant among a barbarous people, not half subjugated, the institutions that time had matured among those who too readily considered themselves masters of that people. It would be presumptuous in me to advert in detail to the exacerbations and long-lived hatred that have perverted the moral sense in Ireland, obstructed religious knowledge, and denied to her a due share of English refinement and civility. It is enough to observe, that the Reformation was ill supported in that country, and that her soil became, through frequent forfeitures, mainly possessed by men whose hearts were not in the land where their wealth lay.

But it is too late, we are told, for retrospection. We have no choice between giving way and a sanguinary war. Surely it is rather too much that the country should be required to take the measure of the threatened evil from a Cabinet which by its being divided against itself, which by its remissness and fear of long and harassing debates in the two Houses, has for many years past fostered the evil, and in no small part created the danger, the extent of which is now urged as imposing the necessity of granting their demands.

Danger is a relative thing, and the first requisite for being in a condition to judge of what we have to dread from the physical force of the Romanists is to be in sympathy with the Protestants. Had our Ministers been truly so, could they have suffered themselves to be bearded by the Catholic Association for so many years as they have been?

I speak openly to you, my Lord, though a member of his Majesty's Privy Council; and begging your pardon for detaining you so long, I hasten to a conclusion.

The civil disabilities, for the removal of which Mr. O'Connell and his followers are braving the Government, cannot but be indifferent to the great body of the Irish nation, except as means for gaining an end. Take away the intermediate power of the priests, and an insurrection in Brobdingnag at the call of the King of Lilliput might be as hopefully expected as that the Irish people would stir as they are now prepared to do at the call of a political demagogue. Now these civil disabilities do not directly affect the priests; they therefore must have ulterior views, and though it must be flattering to their vanity to shew that they have the Irish representation in their own hands, and though their worldly interest and that of their connections will, they know, immediately profit by that dominion, what they look for principally is the advancement of their religion at the cost of Protestantism; that would bring everything else in its train. While it is obvious that the political agitators could not rouse the people without the intervention of the priests, it is true that the priests could not excite the people without a hope that from the exaltation of their Church their social condition would be improved. What in Irish interpretation these words would mean we may tremble to think of.

In whatever way we look, religion is so much mixed up in this matter, that the guardians of the Episcopal Church of the Empire are imperiously called upon to show themselves worthy of the high trust reposed in them. You, my Lord, are convinced that, in spite of the best securities that can be given, the admission of Roman Catholics into the Legislature is a dangerous experiment. Oaths cannot be framed that will avail here; the only securities to be relied upon are what we have little hope to see—the Roman Church reforming itself, and a Ministry and a Parliament sufficiently sensible of the superiority of the one form of religion over the other to be resolved, not only to preserve the present rights and immunities of the Protestant Church inviolate, but

prepared by all fair means for the extension of its influence, with a hope that it may gradually prevail over Papacy.

It is, we trust, the intention of Providence that the Church of Rome should in due time disappear; and come what may on the Church of England, we have the satisfaction of knowing that in defending a Government resting upon a Protestant basis—say what they will, the other party have abandoned—we are working for the welfare of humankind, and supporting whatever there is of dignity in our frail nature.

Here I might stop; but I am above measure anxious for the course which the bench of bishops may take at this crisis. They are appealed to, and even by the Heir Presumptive to the throne from his seat in Parliament. There will be attempts to brow-beat them on the score of humanity; but humanity is, if it deserves the name, a calculating and prospective quality; it will on this occasion balance an evil at hand with a far greater one that is sure, or all but sure, to come. Humanity is not shewn the less by firmness than by tenderness of heart. It is neither deterred by clamour, nor enfeebled by its own sadness; but it estimates evil and good to the best of its power, acts by the dictates of conscience, and trusts the issue to the Ruler of all things.

If, my Lord, I have seemed to write with over-confidence on any opinions I have above given, impute it to a wish of avoiding cumbrous qualifying expressions.

Sincerely do I pray that God may give your Lordship and the rest of your brethren light to guide you and strength to walk in that light.

I am, my Lord, etc.

XIX

POSTSCRIPT TO THE "POETICAL WORKS"

(1835)

POSTSCRIPT TO THE "POETICAL WORKS"

1835[1]

In the present volume, as in those that have preceded it, the reader will have found occasionally opinions expressed upon the course of public affairs, and feelings given vent to as national interests excited them. Since nothing, I trust, has been uttered but in the spirit of reflective patriotism, those notices are left to produce their own effect; but, among the many objects of general concern, and the changes going forward, which I have glanced at in verse, are some especially affecting the lower orders of society: in reference to these, I wish here to add a few words in plain prose.

Were I conscious of being able to do justice to those important topics, I might avail myself of the periodical press for offering anonymously my thoughts, such as they are, to the world; but I feel that in procuring attention, they may derive some advantage, however small, from my name, in addition to that of being presented in a less fugitive shape. It is also not impossible that the state of mind which some of the foregoing poems may have produced in the reader, will dispose him to receive more readily the impression which I desire to make, and to admit the conclusions I would establish.

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[1] This postscript was appended to the fifth volume of the "Poetical Works" of 1836-37, and dated by Wordsworth 1805.—Ed.

I. The first thing that presses upon my attention is the Poor-Law Amendment Act. I am aware of the magnitude and complexity of the subject, and the unwearied attention which it has received from men of far wider experience than my own; yet I cannot forbear touching upon one point of it, and to this I will confine myself, though not insensible to the objection which may reasonably be brought against treating a portion of this, or any other, great scheme of civil polity separately from the whole. The point to which I wish to draw the reader's attention is, that *all* persons who cannot find employment, or procure wages sufficient to support the body in health and strength, are entitled to a maintenance by law.

This dictate of humanity is acknowledged in the Report of the Commissioners: but is there not room for apprehension that some of the regulations of the new act have a tendency to render the principle nugatory by difficulties thrown in the way of applying it? If this be so, persons will not be wanting to show it, by examining the provisions of the act in detail,—an attempt which would be quite out of place here; but it will not, therefore, be deemed unbecoming in one who fears that the prudence of the head may, in framing some of those provisions, have supplanted the wisdom of the heart, to enforce a principle which cannot be violated without infringing upon one of the most precious rights of the English people, and opposing one of the most sacred claims of civilised humanity.

There can be no greater error, in this department of legislation, than the belief that this principle does by necessity operate for the degradation of those who claim, or are so circumstanced as to make it likely they may claim, through laws founded upon it, relief or assistance. The direct contrary is the truth: it may be unanswerably maintained that its tendency is to raise, not to depress; by stamping a value upon life, which can belong to it only where the laws have placed men who are willing to

work, and yet cannot find employment, above the necessity of looking for protection against hunger and other natural evils, either to individual and casual charity, to despair and death, or to the breach of law by theft, or violence.

And here, as, in the Report of the Commissioners, the fundamental principle has been recognised, I am not at issue with them any farther than I am compelled to believe that their "remedial measures" obstruct the application of it more than the interests of society require.

And, calling to mind the doctrines of political economy which are now prevalent, I cannot forbear to enforce the justice of the principle, and to insist upon its salutary operation.

And first for its justice: If self-preservation be the first law of our nature, would not every one in a state of nature be morally justified in taking to himself that which is indispensable to such preservation, where, by so doing, he would not rob another of that which might be equally indispensable to *his* preservation? And if the value of life be regarded in a right point of view, may it not be questioned whether this right of preserving life, at any expense short of endangering the life of another, does not survive man's entering into the social state; whether this right can be surrendered or forfeited, except when it opposes the divine law, upon any supposition of a social compact, or of any convention for the protection of mere rights of property?

But, if it be not safe to touch the abstract question of man's right in a social state to help himself even in the last extremity, may we not still contend for the duty of a Christian government, standing *in loco parentis* towards all its subjects, to make such effectual provision, that no one shall be in danger of perishing either through the neglect or harshness of its legislation? Or, waiving this, is it not indisputable that the claim of the state to the allegiance, involves the protection, of the subject?

And, as all rights in one party impose a correlative duty upon another, it follows that the right of the state to require the services of its members, even to the jeoparding of their lives in the common defence, establishes a right in the people (not to be gainsaid by utilitarians and economists) to public support when, from any cause, they may be unable to support themselves.

Let us now consider the salutary and benign operation of this principle. Here we must have recourse to elementary feelings of human nature, and to truths which from their very obviousness are apt to be slighted, till they are forced upon our notice by our own sufferings or those of others. In the *Paradise Lost*, Milton represents Adam, after the Fall, as exclaiming in the anguish of his soul—

> Did I request Thee, Maker, from my clay
> To mould me man; did I solicit Thee
> From darkness to promote me?
> . . . . . My will
> Concurred not to my being.[1]

Under how many various pressures of misery have men been driven thus, in a strain touching upon impiety, to expostulate with the Creator! and under few so afflictive as when the source and origin of earthly existence have been brought back to the mind by its impending close in the pangs of destitution. But as long as, in our legislation, due weight shall be given to this principle, no man will be forced to bewail the gift of life in hopeless want of the necessaries of life.

Englishmen have, therefore, by the progress of civilisation among them, been placed in circumstances more favourable to piety and resignation to the divine will, than the inhabitants of other countries, where a like provision has not been established. And as Providence, in this care of our countrymen, acts through a human medium, the objects of that care must, in like manner, be more inclined towards a grateful love of their fellow-

[1] See *Paradise Lost*, book x. ll. 743-7.—Ed.

men. Thus, also, do stronger ties attach the people to their country, whether while they tread its soil, or, at a distance, think of their native land as an indulgent parent, to whose arms, even they who have been imprudent and undeserving may, like the prodigal son, betake themselves, without fear of being rejected.

Such is the view of the case that would first present itself to a reflective mind; and it is in vain to show, by appeals to experience, in contrast with this view, that provisions founded upon the principle have promoted profaneness of life, and dispositions the reverse of philanthropic, by spreading idleness, selfishness, and rapacity: for these evils have arisen, not as an inevitable consequence of the principle, but for want of judgment in framing laws based upon it; and, above all, from faults in the mode of administering the law. The mischief that has grown to such a height from granting relief in cases where proper vigilance would have shown that it was not required, or in bestowing it in undue measure, will be urged by no truly enlightened statesman, as a sufficient reason for banishing the principle itself from legislation.

Let us recur to the miserable states of consciousness that it precludes.

There is a story told, by a traveller in Spain, of a female who, by a sudden shock of domestic calamity, was driven out of her senses, and ever after looked up incessantly to the sky, feeling that her fellow-creatures could do nothing for her relief. Can there be Englishmen who, with a good end in view, would, upon system, expose their brother Englishmen to a like necessity of looking upwards only; or downwards to the earth, after it shall contain no spot where the destitute can demand, by civil right, what by right of nature they are entitled to?

Suppose the objects of our sympathy not sunk into this blank despair, but wandering about as strangers in streets and ways, with the hope of succour from casual charity; what have we gained by such a change of

scene? Woeful is the condition of the famished Northern Indian, dependent, among winter snows, upon the chance-passage of a herd of deer, from which one, if brought down by his rifle gun, may be made the means of keeping him and his companions alive. As miserable is that of some savage Islander, who, when the land has ceased to afford him sustenance, watches for food which the waves may cast up, or in vain endeavours to extract it from the inexplorable deep. But neither of these is in a state of wretchedness comparable to that, which is so often endured in civilised society: multitudes, in all ages, have known it, of whom may be said:—

> Homeless, near a thousand homes they stood,
> And near a thousand tables pined, and wanted food.[1]

Justly might I be accused of wasting time in an uncalled-for attempt to excite the feelings of the reader, if systems of political economy, widely spread, did not impugn the principle, and if the safeguards against such extremities were left unimpaired. It is broadly asserted by many, that every man who endeavours to find work, *may* find it: were this assertion capable of being verified, there still would remain a question, what kind of work, and how far may the labourer be fit for it? For if sedentary work is to be exchanged for standing; and some light and nice exercise of the fingers, to which an artisan has been accustomed all his life, for severe labour of the arms; the best efforts would turn to little account, and occasion would be given for the unthinking and the unfeeling unwarrantably to reproach those who are put upon such employment, as idle, froward, and unworthy of relief, either by law or in any other way! Were this statement correct, there would indeed be an end of the argument, the principle here maintained would be superseded. But, alas! it is far otherwise. That principle, applicable to the benefit of all countries, is indispensable for England, upon whose coast families are perpetually

[1] See *Guilt and Sorrow*, stanza 41.—Ed.

deprived of their support by shipwreck, and where large masses of men are so liable to be thrown out of their ordinary means of gaining bread, by changes in commercial intercourse, subject mainly or solely to the will of foreign powers; by new discoveries in arts and manufactures; and by reckless laws, in conformity with theories of political economy, which, whether right or wrong in the abstract, have proved a scourge to tens of thousands, by the abruptness with which they have been carried into practice.

But it is urged,—refuse altogether compulsory relief to the able-bodied, and the number of those who stand in need of relief will steadily diminish through a conviction of an absolute necessity for greater forethought, and more prudent care of a man's earnings. Undoubtedly it would, but so also would it, and in much greater degree, if the legislative provisions were retained and parochial relief administered under the care of the upper classes, as it ought to be. For it has been invariably found, that wherever the funds have been raised and applied under the superintendence of gentlemen and substantial proprietors, acting in vestries, and as overseers, pauperism has diminished accordingly. Proper care in that quarter would effectually check what is felt in some districts to be one of the worst evils in the poor law system, viz. the readiness of small and needy proprietors to join in imposing rates that seemingly subject them to great hardships, while, in fact, this is done with a mutual understanding, that the relief each is ready to bestow upon his still poorer neighbours will be granted to himself, or his relatives, should it hereafter be applied for.

But let us look to inner sentiments of a nobler quality, in order to know what we have to build upon. Affecting proofs occur in every one's experience, who is acquainted with the unfortunate and the indigent, of their unwillingness to derive their subsistence from aught but their own funds or labour, or to be indebted to parochial assistance for the attainment of any object, however dear to them.

A case was reported, the other day, from a coroner's inquest, of a pair who, through the space of four years, had carried about their dead infant from house to house, and from lodging to lodging, as their necessities drove them, rather than ask the parish to bear the expense of its interment:—the poor creatures lived in the hope of one day being able to bury their child at their own cost. It must have been heart-rending to see and hear the mother, who had been called upon to account for the state in which the body was found, make this deposition. By some, judging coldly, if not harshly, this conduct might be imputed to an unwarrantable pride, as she and her husband had, it is true, been once in prosperity. But examples where the spirit of independence works with equal strength, though not with like miserable accompaniments, are frequently to be found even yet among the humblest peasantry and mechanics. There is not, then, sufficient cause for doubting that a like sense of honour may be revived among the people, and their ancient habits of independence restored, without resorting to those severities which the new Poor Law Act has introduced.

But even if the surfaces of things only are to be examined, we have a right to expect that lawgivers should take into account the various tempers and dispositions of mankind; while some are led, by the existence of a legislative provision, into idleness and extravagance, the economical virtues might be cherished in others by the knowledge that, if all their efforts fail, they have in the Poor Laws a "refuge from the storm and a shadow from the heat." Despondency and distraction are no friends to prudence: the springs of industry will relax, if cheerfulness be destroyed by anxiety; without hope men become reckless and have a sullen pride in adding to the heap of their own wretchedness. He who feels that he is abandoned by his fellow-men will be almost irresistibly driven to care little for himself; will lose his self-respect accordingly, and with that loss what remains to him of virtue?

With all due deference to the particular experience, and general intelligence of the individuals who framed the Act, and of those who in and out of Parliament have approved of and supported it; it may be said, that it proceeds too much upon the presumption that it is a labouring man's own fault if he be not, as the phrase is, beforehand with the world. But the most prudent are liable to be thrown back by sickness, cutting them off from labour, and causing to them expense: and who but has observed how distress creeps upon multitudes without misconduct of their own; and merely from a gradual fall in the price of labour, without a correspondent one in the price of provisions; so that men who may have ventured upon the marriage state with a fair prospect of maintaining their families in comfort and happiness, see them reduced to a pittance which no effort of theirs can increase? Let it be remembered, also, that there are thousands with whom vicious habits of expense are not the cause why they do not store up their gains; but they are generous and kind-hearted, and ready to help their kindred and friends; moreover, they have a faith in Providence that those who have been prompt to assist others, will not be left destitute, should they themselves come to need. By acting from these blended feelings, numbers have rendered themselves incapable of standing up against a sudden reverse. Nevertheless, these men, in common with all who have the misfortune to be in want, if many theorists had their wish, would be thrown upon one or other of those three sharp points of condition before adverted to, from which the intervention of law has hitherto saved them.

All that has been said tends to show how the principle contended for makes the gift of life more valuable, and has, it may be hoped, led to the conclusion that its legitimate operation is to make men worthier of that gift: in other words, not to degrade but to exalt human nature. But the subject must not be dismissed without adverting to the indirect influence of the same principle upon the

moral sentiments of a people among whom it is embodied in law. In our criminal jurisprudence there is a maxim, deservedly eulogised, that it is better that ten guilty persons should escape, than that one innocent man should suffer; so, also, might it be maintained with regard to the Poor Laws, that it is better for the interests of humanity among the people at large, that ten undeserving should partake of the funds provided, than that one morally good man, through want of relief, should either have his principles corrupted, or his energies destroyed; than that such a one should either be driven to do wrong, or be cast to the earth in utter hopelessness. In France, the English maxim of criminal jurisprudence is reversed; there, it is deemed better that ten innocent men should suffer, than one guilty escape: in France, there is no universal provision for the poor; and we may judge of the small value set upon human life in the metropolis of that country, by merely noticing the disrespect with which, after death, the body is treated, not by the thoughtless vulgar, but in schools of anatomy, presided over by men allowed to be, in their own art and in physical science, among the most enlightened in the world. In the East, where countries are overrun with population as with a weed, infinitely more respect is shown to the remains of the deceased; and what a bitter mockery is it, that this insensibility should be found where civil polity is so busy in minor regulations, and ostentatiously careful to gratify the luxurious propensities, whether social or intellectual, of the multitude! Irreligion is, no doubt, much concerned with this offensive disrespect, shown to the bodies of the dead in France; but it is mainly attributable to the state in which so many of the living are left by the absence of compulsory provision for the indigent so humanely established by the law of England.

Sights of abject misery, perpetually recurring, harden the heart of the community. In the perusal of history, and of works of fiction, we are not, indeed, unwilling to

have our commiseration excited by such objects of distress as they present to us; but in the concerns of real life, men know that such emotions are not given to be indulged for their own sakes: there, the conscience declares to them that sympathy must be followed by action; and if there exist a previous conviction that the power to relieve is utterly inadequate to the demand, the eye shrinks from communication with wretchedness, and pity and compassion languish, like any other qualities that are deprived of their natural aliment. Let these considerations be duly weighed by those who trust to the hope that an increase of private charity, with all its advantages of superior discrimination, would more than compensate for the abandonment of those principles, the wisdom of which has been here insisted upon. How discouraging, also, would be the sense of injustice, which could not fail to arise in the minds of the well-disposed, if the burden of supporting the poor, a burden of which the selfish have hitherto by compulsion borne a share, should now, or hereafter, be thrown exclusively upon the benevolent.

By having put an end to the Slave Trade and Slavery, the British people are exalted in the scale of humanity; and they cannot but feel so, if they look into themselves, and duly consider their relation to God and their fellow-creatures. That was a noble advance; but a retrograde movement will assuredly be made, if ever the principle, which has been here defended, should be either avowedly abandoned or but ostensibly retained.

But after all, there may be a little reason to apprehend permanent injury from any experiment that may be tried. On the one side will be human nature rising up in her own defence, and on the other prudential selfishness acting to the same purpose, from a conviction that, without a compulsory provision for the exigencies of the labouring multitude, that degree of ability to regulate the price of labour, which is indispensable for the reasonable interest of arts and manufactures, cannot, in Great Britain, be upheld.

II. In a poem of the foregoing collection, allusion is made to the state of the workmen congregated in manufactories.[1] In order to relieve many of the evils to which that class of society are subject and to establish a better harmony between them and their employers, it would be well to repeal such laws as prevent the formation of joint-stock companies. There are, no doubt, many and great obstacles to the formation and salutary working of these societies, inherent in the mind of those whom they would obviously benefit. But the combinations of masters to keep down, unjustly, the price of labour would be fairly checked by them, as far as they were practicable; they would encourage economy, inasmuch as they would enable a man to draw profit from his savings, by investing them in buildings or machinery for processes of manufacture with which he was habitually connected. His little capital would then be working for him while he was at rest or asleep; he would more clearly perceive the necessity of capital for carrying on great works; he would better learn to respect the larger portions of it in the hands of others; he would be less tempted to join in unjust combinations; and, for the sake of his own property, if not for higher reasons, he would be slow to promote local disturbance, or endanger public tranquillity; he would, at least, be loth to act in that way *knowingly:* for it is not to be denied that such societies might be nurseries of opinions unfavourable to a mixed constitution of government, like that of Great Britain. The democratic and republican spirit which they might be apt to foster would not, however, be dangerous in itself, but only as it might act without being sufficiently counterbalanced, either by landed proprietorship, or by a Church extending itself so as to embrace an ever-growing and ever-shifting population of mechanics and artisans. But if the tendencies of such

[1] See, in the "Poetical Works," *Humanity*, belonging to the year 1829.—ED.

societies would be to make the men prosper who might belong to them, rulers and legislators should rejoice in the result, and do their duty to the State by upholding and extending the influence of that Church to which it owes, in so great a measure, its safety, its prosperity, and its glory.

This, in the temper of the present times, may be difficult, but it is become indispensable, since large towns in great numbers have sprung up, and others have increased tenfold, with little or no dependence upon the gentry and the landed proprietors; and apart from those mitigated feudal institutions, which, till of late, have acted so powerfully upon the composition of the House of Commons. Now it may be affirmed that, in quarters where there is not an attachment to the Church, or the landed aristocracy, and a pride in supporting them, *there* the people will dislike both, and be ready, upon such incitements as are perpetually recurring, to join in attempts to overthrow them. There is no neutral ground here: from want of due attention to the state of society in large towns and manufacturing districts, and ignorance or disregard of these obvious truths, innumerable well-meaning persons became zealous supporters of a Reform Bill, the qualities and powers of which, whether destructive or constructive, they would otherwise have been afraid of; and even the framers of that bill, swayed as they might be by party resentments and personal ambition, could not have gone so far, had not they too been lamentably ignorant or neglectful of the same truths both of fact and philosophy.

But let that pass; and let no opponent of the bill be tempted to compliment his own foresight, by exaggerating the mischiefs and dangers that have sprung from it: let not time be wasted in profitless regrets; and let those party distinctions vanish to their very names that have separated men who, whatever course they may have pursued, have ever had a bond of union in the wish to save the limited monarchy, and those other institutions

that have, under Providence, rendered for so long a period of time this country the happiest and worthiest of which there is any record since the foundation of civil society.

III. A philosophic mind is best pleased when looking at religion in its spiritual bearing; as a guide of conduct, a solace under affliction, and a support amid the instabilities of mortal life: but the Church having been forcibly brought by political considerations to my notice, while treating of the labouring classes, I cannot forbear saying a few words upon that momentous topic.

There is a loud clamour for extensive change in that department. The clamour would be entitled to more respect if they who are the most eager to swell it with their voices were not generally the most ignorant of the real state of the Church, and the service it renders to the community. *Reform* is the word employed. Let us pause and consider what sense it is apt to carry, and how things are confounded by a lax use of it. The great religious Reformation, in the sixteenth century, did not profess to be a new construction, but a restoration of something fallen into decay, or put out of sight. That familiar and justifiable use of the word seems to have paved the way for fallacies with respect to the term reform, which it is difficult to escape from. Were we to speak of improvement, and the correction of abuses, we should run less risk of being deceived ourselves, or of misleading others. We should be less likely to fall blindly into the belief, that the change demanded is a renewal of something that has existed before, and, that, therefore, we have experience on our side; nor should we be equally tempted to beg the question, that the change for which we are eager must be advantageous. From generation to generation, men are the dupes of words; and it is painful to observe, that so many of our species are most tenacious of those opinions which they have formed with the least consideration. They who are the readiest to meddle with public affairs, whether in

church or state, fly to generalities, that they may be eased from the trouble of thinking about particulars; and thus is deputed to mechanical instrumentality the work which vital knowledge only can do well.

"Abolish pluralities, have a resident incumbent in every parish," is a favourite cry; but, without adverting to other obstacles in the way of this specious scheme, it may be asked what benefit would accrue from its *indiscriminate* adoption to counterbalance the harm it would introduce, by nearly extinguishing the order of curates, unless the revenues of the church should grow with the population, and be greatly increased in many thinly peopled districts, especially among the parishes of the North.

The order of curates is so beneficial, that some particular notice of it seems to be required in this place. For a church poor as, relatively to the numbers of people, that of England is, and probably will continue to be, it is no small advantage to have youthful servants, who will work upon the wages of hope and expectation. Still more advantageous is it to have, by means of this order, young men scattered over the country, who being more detached from the temporal concerns of the benefice, have more leisure for improvement and study, and are less subject to be brought into secular collision with those who are under their spiritual guardianship. The curate, if he reside at a distance from the incumbent, undertakes the requisite responsibilities of a temporal kind, in that modified way which prevents him, as a new-comer, from being charged with selfishness: while it prepares him for entering upon a benefice of his own, with something of a suitable experience. If he should act under and in co-operation with a resident incumbent, the gain is mutual. His studies will probably be assisted; and his training, managed by a superior, will not be liable to relapse in matters of prudence, seemliness, or in any of the highest cares of his functions; and by way of return for these benefits to the pupil, it will often happen that the zeal

of a middle-aged or declining incumbent will be revived, by being in near communion with the ardour of youth, when his own efforts may have languished through a melancholy consciousness that they have not produced as much good among his flock as, when he first entered upon the charge, he fondly hoped.

Let one remark, and that not the least important, be added. A curate, entering for the first time upon his office, comes from college after a course of expense, and with such inexperience in the use of money, that, in his new situation, he is apt to fall unawares into pecuniary difficulties. If this happens to him, much more likely is it to happen to the youthful incumbent; whose relations to his parishioners and to society, are more complicated; and, his income being larger and independent of another, a costlier style of living is required of him by public opinion. If embarrassment should ensue, and with that unavoidably some loss of respectability, his future usefulness will be proportionably impaired: not so with the curate, for he can easily remove and start afresh with a stock of experience and an unblemished reputation; whereas the early indiscretions of an incumbent being rarely forgotten, may be impediments to the efficacy of his ministry for the remainder of his life. The same observations would apply with equal force to doctrine. A young minister is liable to errors, from his notions being either too lax or overstrained. In both cases it would prove injurious that the errors should be remembered, after study and reflection, with advancing years, shall have brought him to a clearer discernment of the truth, and better judgment in the application of it.

It must be acknowledged that, among the regulations of ecclesiastical polity, none at first view are more attractive than that which prescribes for every parish a resident incumbent. How agreeable to picture one's self, as has been done by poets and romance-writers, from Chaucer down to Goldsmith, a man devoted to his

ministerial office, with not a wish or a thought ranging beyond the circuit of its cares! Nor is it in poetry and fiction only that such characters are found; they are scattered, it is hoped not sparingly, over real life, especially in sequestered and rural districts, where there is but small influx of new inhabitants, and little change of occupation. The spirit of the Gospel, unaided by acquisitions of profane learning and experience in the world,—that spirit, and the obligations of the sacred office may, in such situations, suffice to effect most of what is needful. But for the complex state of society that prevails in England, much more is required, both in large towns and in many extensive districts of the country. A minister there should not only be irreproachable in manners and morals, but accomplished in learning, as far as is possible without sacrifice of the least of his pastoral duties. As necessary, perhaps more so, is it that he should be a citizen as well as a scholar; thoroughly acquainted with the structure of society, and the constitution of civil government, and able to reason upon both with the most expert; all ultimately in order to support the truths of Christianity, and to diffuse its blessings.

A young man coming fresh from the place of his education, cannot have brought with him these accomplishments; and if the scheme of equalising church incomes, which many advisers are much bent upon, be realised, so that there should be little or no secular inducement for a clergyman to desire a removal from the spot where he may chance to have been first set down; surely not only opportunities for obtaining the requisite qualifications would be diminished, but the motives for desiring to obtain them would be proportionably weakened. And yet these qualifications are indispensable for the diffusion of that knowledge, by which alone the political philosophy of the New Testament can be rightly expounded, and its precepts adequately enforced. In these times, when the press is daily exercising so great a power

over the minds of the people, for wrong or for right as may happen, *that* preacher ranks among the first of benefactors who, without stooping to the direct treatment of current politics and passing events, can furnish infallible guidance through the delusions that surround them; and who, appealing to the sanctions of Scripture, may place the grounds of its injunctions in so clear a light, that disaffection shall cease to be cultivated as a laudable propensity, and loyalty cleansed from the dishonour of a blind and prostrate obedience.

It is not, however, in regard to civic duties alone, that this knowledge in a minister of the Gospel is important; it is still more so for softening and subduing private and personal discontents. In all places, and at all times, men have gratuitously troubled themselves, because their survey of the dispensations of Providence has been partial and narrow; but now that readers are so greatly multiplied, men judge as they are *taught*, and repinings are engendered everywhere, by imputations being cast upon the Government: and are prolonged or aggravated by being ascribed to misconduct or injustice in rulers, when the individual himself only is in fault. If a Christian pastor be competent to deal with these humours, as they may be dealt with, and by no members of society so successfully, both from more frequent and more favourable opportunities of intercourse, and by aid of the authority with which he speaks; he will be a teacher of moderation, a dispenser of the wisdom that blunts approaching distress by submission to God's will, and lightens, by patience, grievances which cannot be removed.

We live in times when nothing, of public good at least, is generally acceptable, but what we believe can be traced to preconceived intention, and specific acts and formal contrivances of human understanding. A Christian instructor thoroughly accomplished would be a standing restraint upon such presumptuousness of judgment, by impressing the truth that—

In the unreasoning progress of the world
A wiser spirit is at work for us,
A better eye than ours. MS.[1]

Revelation points to the purity and peace of a future world; but our sphere of duty is upon earth; and the relations of impure and conflicting things to each other must be understood, or we shall be perpetually going wrong, in all but goodness of intention; and goodness of intention will itself relax through frequent disappointment. How desirable, then, is it, that a minister of the Gospel should be versed in the knowledge of existing facts, and be accustomed to a wide range of social experience! Nor is it less desirable for the purpose of counterbalancing and tempering in his own mind that ambition with which spiritual power is as apt to be tainted as any other species of power which men covet or possess.

It must be obvious that the scope of the argument is to discourage an attempt which would introduce into the Church of England an equality of income, and station, upon the model of that of Scotland. The sounder part of the Scottish nation know what good their ancestors derived from their church, and feel how deeply the living generation is indebted to it. They respect and love it, as accommodated in so great a measure to a comparatively poor country, through the far greater portion of which prevails a uniformity of employment; but the acknowledged deficiency of theological learning among the clergy of that church is easily accounted for by this very equality. What else may be wanting there, it would be unpleasant to inquire, and might prove invidious to determine: one thing, however, is clear, that in all countries the temporalities of the Church Establishment should bear an analogy to the state of society, otherwise it cannot diffuse its influence through the whole community. In a country so rich and luxurious

[1] See *The Prelude*, book v. ll. 359-361, and note there the reading "theirs" for "ours."—ED.

as England, the character of its clergy must unavoidably sink, and their influence be everywhere impaired, if individuals from the upper ranks, and men of leading talents, are to have no inducements to enter into that body but such as are purely spiritual. And this "tinge of secularity" is no reproach to the clergy, nor does it imply a deficiency of spiritual endowments. Parents and guardians, looking forward to sources of honourable maintenance for their children and wards, often direct their thoughts early towards the church, being determined partly by outward circumstances, and partly by indications of seriousness, or intellectual fitness. It is natural that a boy or youth, with such a prospect before him, should turn his attention to those studies, and be led into those habits of reflection, which will in some degree tend to prepare him for the duties he is hereafter to undertake. As he draws nearer to the time when he will be called to these duties, he is both led and compelled to examine the Scriptures. He becomes more and more sensible of their truth. Devotion grows in him; and what might begin in temporal considerations, will end (as in a majority of instances we trust it does) in a spiritual-mindedness not unworthy of that Gospel, the lessons of which he is to teach, and the faith of which he is to inculcate. Not inappositely may be here repeated an observation which, from its obviousness and importance, must have been frequently made, viz. that the impoverishing of the clergy, and bringing their incomes much nearer to a level, would not cause them to become less worldly-minded: the emoluments, howsoever reduced, would be as eagerly sought for, but by men from lower classes in society; men who, by their manners, habits, abilities, and the scanty measure of their attainments, would unavoidably be less fitted for their station, and less competent to discharge its duties.

Visionary notions have in all ages been afloat upon the subject of best providing for the clergy; notions which have been sincerely entertained by good men,

with a view to the improvement of that order, and eagerly caught at and dwelt upon, by the designing, for its degradation and disparagement. Some are beguiled by what they call the *voluntary system*, not seeing (what stares one in the face at the very threshold) that they who stand in most need of religious instruction are unconscious of the want, and therefore cannot reasonably be expected to make any sacrifices in order to supply it. Will the licentious, the sensual, and the depraved, take from the means of their gratifications and pursuits, to support a discipline that cannot advance without uprooting the trees that bear the fruit which they devour so greedily? Will *they* pay the price of that seed whose harvest is to be reaped in an invisible world? A voluntary system for the religious exigencies of a people numerous and circumstanced as we are! Not more absurd would it be to expect that a knot of boys should draw upon the pittance of their pocket money to build schools, or out of the abundance of their discretion be able to select fit masters to teach and keep them in order! Some, who clearly perceive the incompetence and folly of such a scheme for the agricultural part of the people, nevertheless think it feasible in large towns, where the rich might subscribe for the religious instruction of the poor. Alas! they know little of the thick darkness that spreads over the streets and alleys of our large towns. The parish of Lambeth, a few years since, contained not more than one church, and three or four small proprietary chapels, while dissenting chapels of every denomination were still more scantily found there; yet the inhabitants of the parish amounted at that time to upwards of 50,000. Were the parish church and the chapels of the Establishment existing there, an *impediment* to the spread of the Gospel among that mass of people? Who shall dare to say so? But if any one, in the face of the fact which has just been stated, and in opposition to authentic reports to the same effect from various other quarters, should still contend, that a

voluntary system is sufficient for the spread and maintenance of religion, we would ask, what kind of religion? wherein would it differ, among the many, from deplorable fanaticism?

For the preservation of the Church Establishment, all men whether they belong to it or not, could they perceive their true interest, would be strenuous; but how inadequate are its provisions for the needs of the country! and how much is it to be regretted that, while its zealous friends yield to alarms on account of the hostility of dissent, they should so much overrate the danger to be apprehended from that quarter, and almost overlook the fact that hundreds of thousands of our fellow-countrymen, though formally and nominally of the Church of England, never enter her places of worship, neither have they communication with her ministers! This deplorable state of things was partly produced by a decay of zeal among the rich and influential, and partly by a want of due expansive power in the constitution of the Establishment as regulated by law. Private benefactors, in their efforts to build and endow churches, have been frustrated, or too much impeded by legal obstacles: these, where they are unreasonable or unfitted for the times, ought to be removed; and, keeping clear of intolerance and injustice, means should be used to render the presence and powers of the church commensurate with the wants of a shifting and still increasing population.

This cannot be effected, unless the English Government vindicate the truth, that, as her church exists for the benefit of all (though not in equal degree), whether of her communion or not, all should be made to contribute to its support. If this ground be abandoned, cause will be given to fear that a moral wound may be inflicted upon the heart of the English people, for which a remedy cannot be speedily provided by the utmost efforts which the members of the Church will themselves be able to make.

But let the friends of the church be of good courage. Powers are at work, by which, under Divine Providence, she may be strengthened and the sphere of her usefulness extended; not by alterations in her Liturgy, accommodated to this or that demand of finical taste, nor by cutting off this or that from her articles or Canons, to which the scrupulous or the overweening may object. Covert schism, and open nonconformity, would survive after alterations, however promising in the eyes of those whose subtilty had been exercised in making them. Latitudinarianism is the parhelion of liberty of conscience, and will ever successfully lay claim to a divided worship. Among Presbyterians, Socinians, Baptists, and Independents, there will always be found numbers who will tire of their several creeds, and some will come over to the Church. Conventicles may disappear, congregations in each denomination may fall into decay or be broken up, but the conquests which the National Church ought chiefly to aim at, lie among the thousands and tens of thousands of the unhappy outcasts who grow up with no religion at all. The wants of these cannot but be feelingly remembered. Whatever may be the disposition of the new constituencies under the reformed parliament, and the course which the men of their choice may be inclined or compelled to follow, it may be confidently hoped that individuals acting in their private capacities, will endeavour to make up for the deficiencies of the legislature. Is it too much to expect that proprietors of large estates, where the inhabitants are without religious instruction, or where it is sparingly supplied, will deem it their duty to take part in this good work; and that thriving manufacturers and merchants will, in their several neighbourhoods, be sensible of the like obligation, and act upon it with generous rivalry?

Moreover, the force of public opinion is rapidly increasing: and some may bend to it, who are not so happy as to be swayed by a higher motive; especially they who derive large incomes from lay impropriations,

in tracts of country where ministers are few and meagrely provided for. A claim still stronger may be acknowledged by those who, round their superb habitations, or elsewhere, walk over vast estates which were lavished upon their ancestors by royal favouritism or purchased at insignificant prices after church-spoliation; such proprietors, though not conscience-stricken (there is no call for that) may be prompted to make a return for which their tenantry and dependents will learn to bless their names. An impulse has been given; an accession of means from these several sources, co-operating with a *well*-considered change in the distribution of some parts of the property at present possessed by the church, a change scrupulously founded upon due respect to law and justice, will, we trust, bring about so much of what her friends desire, that the rest may be calmly waited for, with thankfulness for what shall have been obtained.

Let it not be thought unbecoming in a layman, to have treated at length a subject with which the clergy are more intimately conversant. All may, without impropriety, speak of what deeply concerns all; nor need an apology be offered for going over ground which has been trod before so ably and so often: without pretending, however, to any thing of novelty, either in matter or manner, something may have been offered to view, which will save the writer from the imputation of having little to recommend his labour, but goodness of intention.

It was with reference to thoughts and feelings expressed in verse, that I entered upon the above notices, and with verse I will conclude. The passage is extracted from my MSS. written above thirty years ago: it turns upon the individual dignity which humbleness of social condition does not preclude, but frequently promotes. It has no direct bearing upon clubs for the discussion of public affairs, nor upon political or trade-unions; but if a single workman—who, being a member of one of those clubs, runs the risk of becoming an agitator, or who, being enrolled in a union, must be left without a will of

his own, and therefore a slave—should read these lines, and be touched by them, I should indeed rejoice, and little would I care for losing credit as a poet with intemperate critics, who think differently from me upon political philosophy or public measures, if the sober-minded admit that, in general views, my affections have been moved, and my imagination exercised, under and *for* the guidance of reason.

> Here might I pause, and bend in reverence
> To Nature, and the power of human minds;
> To men as they are men within themselves.
> How oft high service is performed within,
> When all the external man is rude in show;
> Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold,
> But a mere mountain chapel that protects
> Its simple worshippers from sun and shower!
> Of these, said I, shall be my song; of these,
> If future years mature me for the task,
> Will I record the praises, making verse
> Deal boldly with substantial things—in truth
> And sanctity of passion, speak of these,
> That justice may be done, obeisance paid
> Where it is due. Thus haply shall I teach,
> Inspire, through unadulterated ears
> Pour rapture, tenderness, and hope; my theme
> No other than the very heart of man,
> As found among the best of those who live,
> Not unexalted by religious faith,
> Nor uninformed by books, good books, though few
> In Nature's presence: thence may I select
> Sorrow that is not sorrow, but delight,
> And miserable love that is not pain
> To hear of, for the glory that redounds
> Therefrom to human kind, and what we are.
> Be mine to follow with no timid step
> Where knowledge leads me; it shall be my pride
> That I have dared to tread this holy ground,
> Speaking no dream, but things oracular,
> Matter not lightly to be heard by those
> Who to the letter of the outward promise
> Do read the invisible soul; by men adroit
> In speech, and for communion with the world

Accomplished, minds whose faculties are then
Most active when they are most eloquent,
And elevated most when most admired.
Men may be found of other mould than these;
Who are their own upholders, to themselves
Encouragement and energy, and will;
Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively words
As native passion dictates. Others, too,
There are, among the walks of homely life,
Still higher, men for contemplation framed;
Shy, and unpractised in the strife of phrase;
Meek men, whose very souls perhaps would sink
Beneath them, summoned to such intercourse.
Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power,
The thought, the image, and the silent joy:
Words are but under-agents in their souls;
When they are grasping with their greatest strength
They do not breathe among them; this I speak
In gratitude to God, who feeds our hearts
For his own service, knoweth, loveth us,
When we are unregarded by the world.[1]

[1] See *The Prelude*, book xiii. ll. 224-278.—ED.

XX

SERJEANT TALFOURD'S COPY-RIGHT BILL

SERJEANT TALFOURD'S COPY-RIGHT BILL

To the Editor of the Kendal Mercury

SIR,

Having read in your paper of the 7th Inst. a Petition against Serjeant Talfourd's Copy-Right Bill from the Compositors, Pressmen, and others employed in the town of Kendal, to be presented to the House of Commons by the representative of that place, I am induced to make a few remarks upon the same, in which I shall endeavour to be brief.

In the first clause the Petitioners declare "that they view with alarm and regret the measure to repeal the existing law, and to substitute a law highly injurious to the interests of the community, the literature of the country, and more particularly to the interest of the Petitioners."

The effect of the extension of Copy-right proposed in Serjeant Talfourd's Bill would, according to the words of the Petitioners, be to render works having that privilege a "mere dead letter," or confine them to the hands "of the wealthy, and could not be productive of any real advantage to the authors."

If certainties and probabilities be looked at with more discernment than is shewn by these Petitioners, it will be found that a book for which there is a great demand would be sure of being supplied to the public under any circumstances; but a good book in which there might be a continued demand, though not a large one, would

be much more sure of not becoming a "dead letter," if the proposed law were enacted, than if it were not. It is well known among the intelligent that the non-existence of Copy-right for English authors in America is a great hindrance to the republication of standard works. The speculation being left open to unlimited competition, publishers do not risk their capital fearing that some one may afford to undersell them by sending forth the work incorrectly and meanly executed; and thus they who wish to be possessed of standard works are in many cases disappointed. So much for valuable works becoming, through the proposed bill, a "dead letter."

Further, it is well known that readers in the humbler ranks of society are multiplying most rapidly. Is it, then, to be supposed that the possessors of Copy-right would be blind to this fact, and when a work was in the Course of becoming an object of request to the people at large, would be so unmindful of their own interests as not to supply a widely increasing demand at a reduced price? Besides as long as the privilege remained in the hands of the Author's children or descendants who can doubt that they would be peculiarly prompted to extend the circulation of his works, not merely for their own pecuniary advantage, but out of respect or reverence for his memory, and to fulfil what could not but be presumed to be his wishes?

In the next clause it is asserted "that the profits enjoyed by literary men of the present day are of the most ample description, as under the present laws regulating literary property, authors of ordinary talent, have acquired both fame and opulence." The Petitioners if they had looked with care no further than their own neighbourhood, could not have made this assertion. The late Mr. Coleridge resided many years among the Lakes, where his son now resides. It will hardly be disputed that the father was a man of first-rate genius and attainments. Fame, indeed, he acquired, but not till many years after he deserved it; but as to

his opulence, if the Income Tax had continued till the day of his death, the collectors of it would have had a sorry recompense for the trouble of calling upon him for his return. His son whose powers and knowledge are the admiration of all who know him, though not perhaps inclined to dispute that gold may have abounded in the sands of Pactolus, will have no hesitation in affirming that, if he were to judge from his own experience only, the waters of Helicon can make no such boast. Has even Mr. Southey, a most laborious writer and one of high distinction, attained "opulence" by his works, or anything like it? And what, till very lately, have been the gains of another Author who was born, educated and has grown old in the neighbourhood of the Petitioners? The humblest of the band would blush to hear them enumerated. I forbear to speak of other highly distinguished Authors, who have honoured, or do honour, this beautiful country by choosing it for their residence. Not one of them but is too high-minded to repine; but the sense of justice is, I doubt not, sufficiently strong in them all to make them resent the denial to their posterity or their heirs of that moderate compensation, which a rational view of their interests would lead them to aim at, and which the public might be ready to bestow.

But the next clause of the Petition implies that it would be unreasonable and unjust for Authors to look for such posthumous remuneration, the words running thus: —"that every book, after its Author has received from the public an equitable remuneration, becomes the property of the public, who, by affording such remuneration, have purchased it." An equitable remuneration. Here is the Gordian knot of the question, which the Petitioners cut without ceremony. A more than adequate remuneration comes in the course of the season to thousands of works, intended only for the season. But can the profits of one season, or ten seasons, or twenty-eight (the utmost term now allowed by law, unless when the Author is still alive), be justly deemed a sufficient

return for two works (I still confine myself to the production of this neighbourhood) by Mr. Southey, his *Life of Nelson*, and his *Book of the Church?* They are both of interest eminently national: the one will animate our youth to heroic enterprise, strengthen their patriotism, and tend to form and fix their principles as long as the English Navy shall endure; and the other maintain an enlightened attachment to the Church of England, as long as Providence shall allow it to exist.

Another clause asserts "that the proposed law would, if carried into effect, destroy all those useful and hitherto-considered necessary compilations for the instruction of the young, which have been so eminently useful in exciting in the youthful mind a taste for literature and science." Now, so far from there being just reason for apprehending this consequence the direct contrary would ensue, inasmuch as, by extending the term of Copy-right, Authors would be under less temptation to prevent copious extracts being made from their works. For even supposing, which we are not warranted to do, that they would deem it injurious in their interests during their lifetime, they would be more willing to put up with the loss, if the law allowed it to be possible, at least for their Children or Grandchildren, to derive an equivalent from their labours, when they themselves shall be no more.

Still confining our views to this neighbourhood what is the fact? There is lying before me a Book entitled *Gleanings in Poetry*, the preface to which compilation is signed "Richard Bath," and dated "Friends School, Lancaster." This Book with its Notes extends to 612 pages, of which 25 are from the poems of Mr. Wordsworth. Did Mr. Wordsworth ever complain of these extracts, which were made without application for his consent? Or did any other writer, from whom copious extracts are taken, utter such a complaint? Again: there was lately published by Mr. Housman, of Lune Bank, near Lancaster, a Collection of Sonnets from

different Authors, filling 330 pages, of which pages not less than 57 are from the same Author. Did Mr. Wordsworth complain of this liberty being taken? On the contrary, when the Editor informed Mr. W. that the publisher of his works had threatened him with an application to the Court of Chancery for an injunction, Mr. Wordsworth's immediate reply was that he found no fault whatever, and the thing was dropped. Now, the Petitioners might have known this, for the fact was published in your paper at the time it happened, probably by the Editor, or some of his friends; and what is thus true of one individual, it may confidently be affirmed, would have been equally so, if a like liberty had been taken with the works of any other distinguished Author, who resides, or has resided, in this neighbourhood.

To conclude, the objections against the proposed Bill rest on the presumption that it would tend to check the circulation of literature, and by so doing would prove injurious to the public. Strong reasons have been given above for believing that these fears are groundless, and that such an extension of Copy-right would cause the re-printing of many good works, which otherwise, to give back the Petitioners their own words, would nearly remain a "dead letter." But what we want in these times and are likely to want still more, is not the circulation of books, but of good books, and above all the production of Works, the Authors of which look beyond the passing day, and are desirous of pleasing and instructing future generations. Now there cannot be a question that the proposed Bill would strengthen such desire. A conscientious Author, who had a family to maintain, and a prospect of descendants, would regard the additional labour bestowed upon any considerable work he might have in hand, in the light of an insurance of money, upon his own life for the benefit of his issue, and he would be animated in his efforts accordingly, and would cheerfully undergo present privations for such future recompense. Deny it to him, and you unfeelingly

leave a weight upon his spirits, which must deaden his exertions; or you force him to turn his faculties (unless he is unjust to those whom both nature and law require that he should provide for) to inferior employments, and lastly you violate a fundamental right, by leaving that species of property which has the highest claim to protection, with the least share of it; for as to the analogy, which has been elsewhere much dwelt upon, between literary property, and mechanical inventions, and chemical discoveries, it is, as might be shown in a few words, altogether fallacious.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

A. B.[1]

12*th April* 1838.

[1] *A. B.* was the *nom-de-plume* adopted by Wordsworth in this instance.—ED

XXI

KENDAL AND WINDERMERE RAILWAY

These *Two Letters*, on the "Kendal and Windermere Railway"—originally published in *The Morning Post* in 1844 were reprinted at Kendal, in a small pamphlet, under the following title, *Kendal and Windermere Railway, Two Letters reprinted from the Morning Post, revised with additions.* London: Whittaker & Co., Ave Maria Lane; and Edward Moxon, Dover Street. R. Branthwaite & Son, Kendal.

The Sonnet, of October 12, 1844, with its accompanying notes, on the projected railway, was prefixed to the first letter. —Ed.

KENDAL AND WINDERMERE RAILWAY

No. I.

To the Editor of The Morning Post [1]

Sir,

Some little time ago you did me the favour of inserting a sonnet expressive of the regret and indignation which, in common with others all over these Islands, I felt at the proposal of a railway to extend from Kendal to Low Wood, near the head of Windermere. The project was so offensive to a large majority of the proprietors through whose lands the line, after it came in view of the Lake, was to pass, that, for this reason, and the avowed one of the heavy expense without which the difficulties in the way could not be overcome, it has been partially abandoned, and the terminus is now announced to be at a spot within a mile of Bowness. But as no guarantee can be given that the project will not hereafter be revived, and an attempt made to carry the line forward through the vales of Ambleside and Grasmere, and as in one main particular the case remains essentially the same, allow me to address you upon certain points which merit more consideration than the favourers of the scheme have yet given them. The matter, though seemingly local, is really one in which all persons of taste must be interested, and, therefore,

[1] Published October 16, 1844.—Ed.

I hope to be excused if I venture to treat it at some length.

I shall barely touch upon the statistics of the question, leaving these to the two adverse parties, who will lay their several statements before the Board of Trade, which may possibly be induced to refer the matter to the House of Commons; and, contemplating that possibility, I hope that the observations I have to make may not be altogether without influence upon the public, and upon individuals whose duty it may be to decide in their place whether the proposed measure shall be referred to a Committee of the House. Were the case before us an ordinary one, I should reject such an attempt as presumptuous and futile; but it is not only different from all others, but, in truth, peculiar.

In this district the manufactures are trifling; mines it has none, and its quarries are either wrought out or superseded; the soil is light, and the cultivatable parts of the country are very limited; so that it has little to send out, and little has it also to receive. Summer TOURISTS, (and the very word precludes the notion of a railway) it has in abundance; but the inhabitants are so few and their intercourse with other places so infrequent, that one daily coach, which could not be kept going but through its connection with the Post-office, suffices for three-fourths of the year along the line of country as far as Keswick. The staple of the district is, in fact, its beauty and its character of seclusion and retirement; and to these topics and to others connected with them my remarks shall be confined.

The projectors have induced many to favour their schemes by declaring that one of their main objects is to place the beauties of the Lake district within easier reach of those who cannot afford to pay for ordinary conveyances. Look at the facts. Railways are completed, which, joined with others in rapid progress, will bring travellers who prefer approaching by Ullswater to within four miles of that lake. The Lancaster and

Carlisle Railway will approach the town of Kendal, about eight or nine miles from eminences that command the whole vale of Windermere. The Lakes are therefore at present of very easy access for *all* persons; but if they be not made still more so, the poor, it is said, will be wronged. Before this be admitted let the question be fairly looked into, and its different bearings examined. No one can assert that, if this intended mode of approach be not effected, anything will be taken away that is actually possessed. The wrong, if any, must lie in the unwarrantable obstruction of an attainable benefit. First, then, let us consider the probable amount of that benefit.

Elaborate gardens, with topiary works, were in high request, even among our remote ancestors, but the relish for choice and picturesque natural *scenery* (a poor and mean word which requires an apology, but will be generally understood), is quite of recent origin. Our earlier travellers — Ray, the naturalist, one of the first men of his age — Bishop Burnet, and others who had crossed the Alps, or lived some time in Switzerland, are silent upon the sublimity and beauty of those regions; and Burnet even uses these words, speaking of the Grisons — "When they have made up estates elsewhere they are glad to leave Italy and the best parts of Germany, and to come and live among those mountains of which the very sight is enough to fill a man with horror." The accomplished Evelyn, giving an account of his journey from Italy through the Alps, dilates upon the terrible, the melancholy, and the uncomfortable; but, till he comes to the fruitful country in the neighbourhood of Geneva, not a syllable of delight or praise. In the *Sacra Telluris Theoria* of the other Burnet there is a passage — omitted, however, in his own English translation of the work — in which he gives utterance to his sensations, when, from a particular spot he beheld a tract of the Alps rising before him on the one hand, and on the other the Mediterranean Sea spread beneath him. Nothing can be worthier of the magnificent appearances

he describes than his language. In a noble strain also does the Poet Gray address, in a Latin Ode, the *Religio loci* at the Grande Chartruise. But before his time, with the exception of the passage from Thomas Burnet just alluded to, there is not, I believe, a single English traveller whose published writings would disprove the assertion, that, where precipitous rocks and mountains are mentioned at all, they are spoken of as objects of dislike and fear, and not of admiration. Even Gray himself, describing, in his Journal, the steeps at the entrance of Borrowdale, expresses his terror in the language of Dante:—"Let us not speak of them, but look and pass on." In my youth, I lived some time in the vale of Keswick, under the roof of a shrewd and sensible woman, who more than once exclaimed in my hearing, "Bless me! folk are always talking about prospects; when I was young there was never sic a thing neamed." In fact, our ancestors, as everywhere appears, in choosing the site of their houses, looked only at shelter and convenience, especially of water, and often would place a barn or any other out-house directly in front of their habitations, however beautiful the landscape which their windows might otherwise have commanded. The first house that was built in the Lake district for the sake of the beauty of the country was the work of a Mr. English, who had travelled in Italy, and chose for his site, some eighty years ago, the great island of Windermere; but it was sold before his building was finished, and he showed how little he was capable of appreciating the character of the situation by setting up a length of high garden-wall, as exclusive as it was ugly, almost close to the house. The nuisance was swept away when the late Mr. Curwen became the owner of this favoured spot. Mr. English was followed by Mr. Pocklington, a native of Nottinghamshire, who played strange pranks by his buildings and plantations upon Vicar's Island, in Derwentwater, which his admiration, such as it was, of the country, and probably a wish to

be a leader in a new fashion, had tempted him to purchase. But what has all this to do with the subject? —Why, to show that a vivid perception of romantic scenery is neither inherent in mankind, nor a necessary consequence of even a comprehensive education. It is benignly ordained that green fields, clear blue skies, running streams of pure water, rich groves and woods, orchards, and all the ordinary varieties of rural Nature, should find an easy way to the affections of all men, and more or less so from early childhood till the senses are impaired by old age and the sources of mere earthly enjoyment have in a great measure failed. But a taste beyond this, however desirable it may be that every one should possess it, is not to be implanted at once; it must be gradually developed both in nations and individuals. Rocks and mountains, torrents and wide-spread waters, and all those features of Nature which go to the composition of such scenes as this part of England is distinguished for, cannot, in their finer relations to the human mind, be comprehended, or even very imperfectly conceived, without processes of culture or opportunities of observation in some degree habitual. In the eye of thousands and tens of thousands, a rich meadow, with fat cattle grazing upon it, or the sight of what they would call a heavy crop of corn, is worth all that the Alps and Pyrenees in their utmost grandeur and beauty could show to them; and notwithstanding the grateful influence, as we have observed, of ordinary Nature and the productions of the fields, it is noticeable what trifling conventional prepossessions will, in common minds, not only preclude pleasure from the sight of natural beauty, but will even turn it into an object of disgust. "If I had to do with this garden," said a respectable person, one of my neighbours, "I would sweep away all the black and dirty stuff from that wall." The wall was backed by a bank of earth, and was exquisitely decorated with ivy, flowers, moss, and ferns, such as grow of themselves in like places; but the mere

notion of fitness associated with a trim garden-wall, prevented, in this instance, all sense of the spontaneous bounty and delicate care of Nature. In the midst of a small pleasure-ground, immediately below my house, rises a detached rock, equally remarkable for the beauty of its form, the ancient oaks that grew out of it, and the flowers and shrubs which adorn it. "What a nice place would this be," said a Manchester tradesman, pointing to the rock, "if that ugly lump were but out of the way." Men as little advanced in the pleasure which such objects give to others are so far from being rare, that they may be said fairly to represent a large majority of mankind. This is a fact, and none but the deceiver and the willingly deceived can be offended by its being stated. But as a more susceptible taste is undoubtedly a great acquisition, and has been spreading among us for some years, the question is, what means are most likely to be beneficial in extending its operation? Surely that good is not to be obtained by transferring at once uneducated persons in large bodies to particular spots, where the combinations of natural objects are such as would afford the greatest pleasure to those who have been in the habit of observing and studying the peculiar character of such scenes, and how they differ one from another. Instead of tempting artisans and labourers, and the humbler classes of shopkeepers, to ramble to a distance, let us rather look with lively sympathy upon persons in that condition, when, upon a holiday, or on the Sunday, after having attended divine worship, they make little excursions with their wives and children among neighbouring fields, whither the whole of each family might stroll, or be conveyed at much less cost than would be required to take a single individual of the number to the shores of Windermere by the cheapest conveyance. It is in some such way as this only, that persons who must labour daily with their hands for bread in large towns, or are subject to confinement through the week, can be trained to a profitable intercourse with Nature where she

is the most distinguished by the majesty and sublimity of her forms.

For further illustration of the subject, turn to what we know of a man of extraordinary genius, who was bred to hard labour in agricultural employments, Burns, the poet. When he had become distinguished by the publication of a volume of verses, and was enabled to travel by the profit his poems brought him, he made a tour, in the course of which, as his companion, Dr. Adair, tells us, he visited scenes inferior to none in Scotland in beauty, sublimity, and romantic interest; and the Doctor having noticed, with other companions, that he seemed little moved upon one occasion by the sight of such a scene, says—"I doubt if he had much taste for the picturesque." The personal testimony, however, upon this point is conflicting; but when Dr. Currie refers to several local poems as decisive proofs that Burns' fellow-traveller was mistaken, the biographer is surely unfortunate. How vague and tame are the poet's expressions in those few local poems, compared with his language when he is describing objects with which his position in life allowed him to be familiar! It appears, both from what his works contain, and from what is not to be found in them, that, sensitive as they abundantly prove his mind to have been in its intercourse with common rural images, and with the general powers of Nature exhibited in storm and in stillness, in light or in darkness, and in the various aspects of the seasons, he was little affected by the sight of one spot in preference to another, unless where it derived an interest from history, tradition, or local associations. He lived many years in Nithsdale, where he was in daily sight of Skiddaw, yet he never crossed the Solway for a better acquaintance with that mountain; and I am persuaded that, if he had been induced to ramble among our Lakes, by that time sufficiently celebrated, he would have seldom been more excited than by some ordinary Scottish stream or hill with a tradition attached to it, or which had been the

scene of a favourite ballad or love song. If all this be truly said of such a man, and the like cannot be denied of the eminent individuals before named, who to great natural talents added the accomplishments of scholarship or science, then what ground is there for maintaining that the poor are treated with disrespect, or wrong done to them or any class of visitants, if we be reluctant to introduce a railway into this country for the sake of lessening by eight or nine miles only, the fatigue or expense of their journey to Windermere?—And wherever any one among the labouring classes has made even an approach to the sensibility which drew a lamentation from Burns when he had uprooted a daisy with his plough, and caused him to turn the "weeder-clips aside" from the thistle, and spare "the symbol dear" of his country, then surely such a one, could he afford by any means to travel as far as Kendal, would not grudge a two hours' walk across the skirts of the beautiful country that he was desirous of visiting.

The wide-spread waters of these regions are in their nature peaceful; so are the steep mountains and the rocky glens: nor can they be profitably enjoyed but by a mind disposed to peace. Go to a pantomime, a farce, or a puppet-show, if you want noisy pleasure—the crowd of spectators who partake your enjoyment will, by their presence and acclamations, enhance it; but may those who have given proof that they prefer other gratifications continue to be safe from the molestation of cheap trains pouring out their hundreds at a time along the margin of Windermere; nor let any one be liable to the charge of being selfishly disregardful of the poor, and their innocent and salutary enjoyments, if he does not congratulate himself upon the especial benefit which would thus be conferred on such a concourse.

> O, Nature, a' thy shows an' forms,
> To feeling pensive hearts hae charms![1]

[1] See Burns's *To William S*[*impson*], Ochiltree, May 1785, stanza 14.—Ed.

So exclaimed the Ayrshire ploughman, speaking of ordinary rural Nature under the varying influences of the seasons, and the sentiment has found an echo in the bosoms of thousands in as humble a condition as he himself was when he gave vent to it. But then they were feeling, pensive hearts; men who would be among the first to lament the facility with which they had approached this region, by a sacrifice of so much of its quiet and beauty, as, from the intrusion of a railway, would be inseparable. What can, in truth, be more absurd, than that either rich or poor should be spared the trouble of travelling by high roads over so short a space according to their respective means, if the unavoidable consequence must be a great disturbance of the retirement, and in many places a destruction of the beauty of the country, which the parties are come in search of? Would not this be pretty much like the child's cutting his drum to learn where the sound came from?

Having, I trust, given sufficient reason for the belief that the imperfectly educated classes are not likely to draw much good from rare visits to the Lakes performed in this way, and surely on their own account it is not desirable that the visits should be frequent, let us glance at the mischief which such facilities would certainly produce. The directors of railway companies are always ready to devise or encourage entertainments for tempting the humbler classes to leave their homes. Accordingly, for the profit of the shareholders and that of the lower class of innkeepers, we should have wrestling matches, horse and boat races without number, and pot-houses and beer-shops would keep pace with these excitements and recreations, most of which might too easily be had elsewhere. The injury which would thus be done to morals, both among this influx of strangers and the lower class of inhabitants, is obvious; and, supposing such extraordinary temptations not to be held out, there cannot be a doubt that the Sabbath day in the towns of

Bowness and Ambleside, and other parts of the district, would be subject to much additional desecration.

Whatever comes of the scheme which we have endeavoured to discountenance, the charge against its opponents of being selfishly regardless of the poor, ought to cease. The cry has been raised and kept up by three classes of persons —they who wish to bring into discredit all such as stand in the way of their gains or gambling speculations; they who are dazzled by the application of physical science to the useful arts, and indiscriminately applaud what they call the spirit of the age as manifested in this way; and, lastly, those persons who are ever ready to step forward in what appears to them to be the cause of the poor, but not always with becoming attention to particulars. I am well aware that upon the first class what has been said will be of no avail, but upon the two latter some impression will, I trust, be made.

To conclude. The railway power, we know well, will not admit of being materially counteracted by sentiment; and who would wish it where large towns are connected, and the interests of trade and agriculture are substantially promoted, by such mode of intercommunication? But be it remembered, that this case is, as has been said before, a peculiar one, and that the staple of the country is its beauty and its character of retirement. Let then the beauty be undisfigured and the retirement unviolated, unless there be reason for believing that rights and interests of a higher kind and more apparent than those which have been urged in behalf of the projected intrusion will compensate the sacrifice. Thanking you for the judicious observations that have appeared in your paper upon the subject of railways,

I remain, Sir,

Your obliged,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 9, 1844.

In the edition of these *Two Letters* published in London, "revised with additions," the following occurs at the end of the first letter.

NOTE.—To the instances named in this letter of the indifference even of men of genius to the sublime forms of nature in mountainous districts, the author of the interesting Essays, in the *Morning Post*, entitled Table Talk, has justly added Goldsmith, and I give the passage in his own words :—

"The simple and gentle-hearted Goldsmith, who had an exquisite sense of rural beauty in the familiar forms of hill and dale, and meadows with their hawthorn-scented hedges, does not seem to have dreamt of any such thing as beauty in the Swiss Alps, though he traversed them on foot, and had therefore the best opportunities of observing them. In his poem *The Traveller* he describes the Swiss as loving their mountain homes, not by reason of the romantic beauty of the situation, but in spite of the miserable character of the soil, and the stormy horrors of their mountain steeps."

In the same Essay (December 18, 1844), are many observations judiciously bearing upon the true character of this and similar projects.

NO. II.

To the Editor of The Morning Post[1]

SIR,

As you obligingly found space in your journal for observations of mine upon the intended Kendal and Windermere Railway, I venture to send you some further remarks upon the same subject. The scope of the main argument, it will be recollected, was to prove that the perception of what has acquired the name of picturesque and romantic scenery is so far from being intuitive, that it can be produced only by a slow and gradual process of culture; and to show, as a consequence, that the humbler ranks of society are not, and cannot be, in a state to gain material benefit from a more speedy access

[1] Published December 17, 1844.—ED.

than they now have to this beautiful region. Some of our opponents dissent from this latter proposition, though the most judicious of them readily admit the former; but then, overlooking not only positive assertions, but reasons carefully given, they say, "As you allow that a more comprehensive taste is desirable, you ought to side with us;" and they illustrate their position, by reference to the British Museum and National Picture Gallery. "There," they add, "thanks to the easy entrance now granted, numbers are seen, indicating by their dress and appearance their humble condition, who, when admitted for the first time, stare vacantly around them, so that one is inclined to ask what brought them hither? But an impression is made, something gained which may induce them to repeat the visit until light breaks in upon them, and they take an intelligent interest in what they behold." Persons who talk thus forget that, to produce such an improvement, frequent access, at small cost of time and labour is indispensable. Manchester lies, perhaps, within eight hours' railway distance of London: but surely no one would advise that Manchester operatives should contract a habit of running to and fro between that town and London, for the sake of forming an intimacy with the British Museum and National Gallery? No, no; little would all but a very few gain from the opportunities which, consistently with common sense, could be afforded them for such expeditions. Nor would it fare better with them in respect of trips to the lake district; an assertion, the truth of which no one can doubt, who has learned by experience how many men of the same or higher rank, living from their birth in this very region, are indifferent to those objects around them in which a cultivated taste takes so much pleasure. I should not have detained the reader so long upon this point, had I not heard (glad tidings for the directors and traffickers in shares!) that among the affluent and benevolent manufacturers of Yorkshire and Lancashire are some who already entertain the thought of sending,

at their own expense, large bodies of their workmen, by railway, to the banks of Windermere. Surely these gentlemen will think a little more before they put such a scheme into practice. The rich man cannot benefit the poor, nor the superior the inferior, by anything that degrades him. Packing off men after this fashion, for holiday entertainment, is, in fact, treating them like children. They go at the will of their master, and must return at the same, or they will be dealt with as transgressors.

A poor man, speaking of his son, whose time of service in the army was expired, once said to me, (the reader will be startled by the expression, and I, indeed, was greatly shocked by it), "I am glad he has done with that *mean* way of life." But I soon gathered what was at the bottom of the feeling. The father overlooked all the glory that attaches to the character of a British soldier, in the consciousness that his son's will must have been in so great a degree subject to that of others. The poor man felt where the true dignity of his species lay, namely, in a just proportion between actions governed by a man's own inclinations and those of other men ; but, according to the father's notion, that proportion did not exist in the course of life from which his son had been released. Had the old man known from experience the degree of liberty allowed to the common soldier, and the moral effect of the obedience required, he would have thought differently, and had he been capable of extending his views, he would have felt how much of the best and noblest part of our civic spirit was owing to our military and naval institutions, and that perhaps our very existence as a free people had by them been maintained. This extreme instance has been adduced to show how deeply seated in the minds of Englishmen is their sense of personal independence. Master-manufacturers ought never to lose sight of this truth. Let them consent to a Ten Hours' Bill, with little, or, if possible, no diminution of wages, and the necessaries of

life being more easily procured, the mind will develop itself accordingly, and each individual would be more at liberty to make, at his own cost, excursions in any direction which might be most inviting to him. There would then be no need for their masters sending them in droves scores of miles from their homes and families to the borders of Windermere, or anywhere else. Consider also the state of the Lake District; and look, in the first place, at the little town of Bowness, in the event of such railway inundations. What would become of it in this, not the Retreat, but the Advance of the Ten Thousand! Leeds, I am told, has sent as many at once to Scarborough. We should have the whole of Lancashire, and no small part of Yorkshire, pouring in upon us to meet the men of Durham, and the borderers from Cumberland and Northumberland. Alas, alas, if the Lakes are to pay this penalty for their own attractions!

> Vane could tell what ills from beauty spring,
> And Sedley cursed the form that pleased a king.

The fear of adding to the length of my last long letter prevented me from entering into details upon private and personal feelings among the residents, who have cause to lament the threatened intrusion. These are not matters to be brought before a Board of Trade, though I trust there will always be of that board members who know well that as we do "not live by bread alone," so neither do we live by political economy alone. Of the present Board I would gladly believe there is not one who, if his duty allowed it, would not be influenced by considerations of what may be felt by a gallant officer now serving on the coast of South America, when he shall learn that the nuisance, though not intended actually to enter his property, will send its omnibuses, as fast as they can drive, within a few yards of his modest abode, which he built upon a small domain purchased at a price greatly enhanced by the privacy and beauty of the situation. Professor Wilson (him I

take the liberty to name), though a native of Scotland, and familiar with the grandeur of his own country, could not resist the temptation of settling long ago among our mountains. The place which his public duties have compelled him to quit as a residence, and may compel him to part with, is probably dearer to him than any spot upon earth. The reader should be informed with what respect he has been treated. Engineer agents, to his astonishment, came and intruded with their measuring instruments, upon his garden. He saw them; and who will not admire the patience that kept his hands from their shoulders? I must stop.

But with the fear before me of the line being carried, at a day not distant, through the whole breadth of the district, I could dwell, with much concern for other residents, upon the condition which they would be in, if that outrage should be committed; nor ought it to be deemed impertinent were I to recommend this point to the especial regard of Members of Parliament, who may have to decide upon the question. The two Houses of Legislature have frequently shown themselves not unmindful of private feeling in these matters. They have, in some cases, been induced to spare parks and pleasure grounds. But along the great railway lines these are of rare occurrence. They are but a part, and a small part; here it is far otherwise. Among the ancient inheritances of the yeomen, surely worthy of high respect, are interspersed through the entire district villas, most of them with such small domains attached that the occupants would be hardly less annoyed by a railway passing through their neighbour's ground than through their own. And it would be unpardonable not to advert to the effect of this measure on the interests of the very poor in this locality. With the town of Bowness I have no *minute* acquaintance; but of Ambleside, Grasmere, and the neighbourhood, I can testify from long experience, that they have been favoured by the residence of a gentry whose love of retirement has been a blessing

to these vales; for their families have ministered, and still minister, to the temporal and spiritual necessities of the poor, and have personally superintended the education of the children in a degree which does those benefactors the highest honour, and which is, I trust, gratefully acknowledged in the hearts of all whom they have relieved, employed, and taught. Many of those friends of our poor would quit this country if the apprehended change were realised, and would be succeeded by strangers not linked to the neighbourhood, but flitting to and fro between their fancy villas and the homes where their wealth was accumulated and accumulating by trade and manufactures. It is obvious that persons, so unsettled, whatever might be their good wishes and readiness to part with money for charitable purposes, would ill supply the loss of the inhabitants who had been driven away.

It will be felt by those who think with me upon this occasion that I have been writing on behalf of a social condition which no one who is competent to judge of it will be willing to subvert, and that I have been endeavouring to support moral sentiments and intellectual pleasures of a high order against an enmity which seems growing more and more formidable every day; I mean "Utilitarianism," serving as a mask for cupidity and gambling speculations. My business with this evil lies in its reckless mode of action by Railways, now its favourite instruments. Upon good authority I have been told that there was lately an intention of driving one of these pests, as they are likely too often to prove, through a part of the magnificent ruins of Furness Abbey—an outrage which was prevented[1] by some one pointing out how easily a deviation might be made; and the hint produced its due effect upon the engineer.

Sacred as that relic of the devotion of our ancestors deserves to be kept, there are temples of Nature, temples

[1] Alas! only for a time.—Ed.

built by the Almighty, which have a still higher claim to be left unviolated. Almost every reach of the winding vales in this district might once have presented itself to a man of imagination and feeling under that aspect, or, as the Vale of Grasmere appeared to the Poet Gray more than seventy years ago. "No flaring gentleman's-house," says he, "nor garden-walls break in upon the repose of this little unsuspected *paradise*, but all is peace," etc. etc. Were the Poet now living, how would he have lamented the probable intrusion of a railway with its scarifications, its intersections, its noisy machinery, its smoke, and swarms of pleasure-hunters, most of them thinking that they do not fly fast enough through the country which they have come to see. Even a broad highway may in some places greatly impair the characteristic beauty of the country, as will be readily acknowledged by those who remember what the Lake of Grasmere was before the new road that runs along its eastern margin had been constructed.

> Quanto praestantius esset
> Numen aquae viridi si margine clauderet undas
> Herba——[1]

As it once was, and fringed with wood, instead of the breast-work of bare wall that now confines it. In the same manner has the beauty, and still more the sublimity of many Passes in the Alps been injuriously affected. Will the reader excuse a quotation from a MS. poem in which I attempted to describe the impression made upon my mind by the descent towards Italy along the Simplon before the new military road had taken the place of the old muleteer track with its primitive simplicities?

> Brook and road
> Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy Pass,
> And with them did we journey several hours
> At a slow step. The immeasurable height
> Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,

[1] See Juvenal, *Satires* iii. 18-20.—ED.

The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And in the narrow rent, at every turn,
Winds thwarting winds bewildered and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light,
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

1799.[1]

Thirty years afterwards I crossed the Alps by the same Pass; and what had become of the forms and powers to which I had been indebted for those emotions? Many of them remained of course undestroyed and indestructible. But, though the road and torrent continued to run parallel to each other, their fellowship was put an end to. The stream had dwindled into comparative insignificance, so much had Art interfered with and taken the lead of Nature; and, although the utility of the new work, as facilitating the intercourse of great nations, was readily acquiesced in, and the workmanship, in some places, could not but excite admiration, it was impossible to suppress regret for what had vanished for ever. The oratories heretofore not unfrequently met with, on a road still somewhat perilous, were gone; the simple and rude bridges swept away; and instead of travellers proceeding, with leisure to observe and feel, were pilgrims of fashion hurried along in their carriages, not a few of them perhaps discussing the merits of "the last new Novel," or poring over their Guide-books, or fast asleep.

[1] See the "Poetical Works," vol. ii. p. 69; also *The Prelude*, book i. l. 621.—ED.

Similar remarks might be applied to the mountainous country of Wales; but there too, the plea of utility, especially as expediting the communication between England and Ireland, more than justifies the labours of the Engineer. Not so would it be with the Lake District. A railroad is already planned along the sea coast, and another from Lancaster to Carlisle is in great forwardness: an intermediate one is therefore, to say the least of it, superfluous. Once for all let me declare that it is not against Railways but against the abuse of them that I am contending.

How far I am from undervaluing the benefit to be expected from railways in their legitimate application will appear from the following lines published in 1837,[1] and composed some years earlier.

STEAMBOATS AND RAILWAYS

Motions and Means, on sea, on land at war
With old poetic feeling, not for this
Shall ye, by poets even, be judged amiss!
Nor shall your presence, howsoe'er it mar
The loveliness of Nature, prove a bar
To the mind's gaining that prophetic sense
Of future good, that point of vision, whence
May be discovered what in soul ye are,
In spite of all that Beauty must disown
In your harsh features, Nature doth embrace
Her lawful offspring in man's Art; and Time,
Pleased with your triumphs o'er his brother Space,
Accepts from your bold hands the proffered crown
Of hope, and welcomes you with cheer sublime.

I have now done with the subject. The time of life at which I have arrived may, I trust, if nothing else will, guard me from the imputation of having written from any selfish interests, or from fear of disturbance which a railway might cause to myself. If gratitude for what repose and quiet in a district hitherto, for the most part, not disfigured but beautified by human hands, have done

[1] They were composed in 1833, and published in 1835.—ED.

for me through the course of a long life, and hope that others might hereafter be benefited in the same manner and in the same country, *be* selfishness, then indeed, but not otherwise, I plead guilty to the charge. Nor have I opposed this undertaking on account of the inhabitants of the district *merely*, but, as hath been intimated, for the sake of every one, however humble his condition, who coming hither shall bring with him an eye to perceive, and a heart to feel and worthily enjoy. And as for holiday pastimes, if a scene is to be chosen suitable to them for persons thronging from a distance, it may be found elsewhere at less cost of every kind. But, in fact, we have too much hurrying about in these islands; much for idle pleasure, and more from over activity in the pursuit of wealth, without regard to the good or happiness of others.

Proud were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old,
Your patriot sons, to stem invasive war,
Intrenched your brows; ye gloried in each scar:
Now, for your shame, a Power, the Thirst of Gold,
That rules o'er Britain like a baneful star,
Wills that your peace, your beauty, shall be sold,
And clear way made for her triumphal car
Through the beloved retreats your arms enfold!
Heard YE that Whistle? As her long-linked Train
Swept onwards, did the vision cross your view?
Yes, ye were startled;—and, in balance true,
Weighing the mischief with the promised gain,
Mountains, and Vales, and Floods, I call on you
To share the passion of a just disdain.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

In *The Morning Post* of December 18, 1844, the following verses are published :—

Wednesday, December 18, 1844

TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

(Occasioned by his Letter on the contemplated Lake Railroad.)

O well befits the deep indignant strain
Poured from the home where thou so long hast dwelt,

And, worshipping at Nature's shrine hast knelt,
Dear Poet ! and made this thine own domain ;
Thee well befits it, to reprove, complain.
Who would not, that has felt as thou hast felt,
Pure thoughts and deepest wisdom, who hast dealt
So long to a proud world enslaved to gain ?
These vales are sacred, mountain, stream, and glen,
Hallowed by thee and thine ennobling art
To higher purposes—to soothe the heart
And nourish better thoughts in wearied men.
On then, and spare not, Poet ! lift thy voice
That wrong so great be spared this region of thy choice.

M.

END OF VOL. II

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